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OLD SLEUTH WEEKLY

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THE DEMON DOCTOR

AND OTHER STORIES

"WITH A YELL OF RAGE, BARNEY DRIVER SPRUNG FROM HIS CHAIR AS IF TO RUSH UPON THE PALE-FACED BOY, WHO STOOD BREATHLESSLY, JUST INSIDE THE WINDOW."

by OLD SLEUTH

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THE MOST THRILLING DETECTIVE STORIES EVER PUBLISHED

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CLEVELAND, OHIO, MAY 17, 1912

THE DEMON DOCTOR;

OR

DEADHOLD, THE "KID" DETECTIVE

BY "OLD SLEUTH"

PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS IN THIS STORY.

PROFESSOR LE FEVRE—Known as The Demon Doctor, a learned man, whose lore of scientific facts, and his manner of applying them, caused a deep mystery to be unravelled.

FRANK TRENTON—Better known to fame as Deadhold, The Kid Detective. This Kid managed to protect and save a beautiful girl, and after accomplishing a mission that was marvelous in its execution, the Kid sprang upon those whom the Kid had aided, the "surprise of their lives."

BARNEY DRIVER—An escaped convict, a burglar who robbed the Eighth National Bank at Albany, N. Y., and then posed as an honest millhand at the Star Steel Works, at Pittsburg, and who finally met his fate, in spite of his outlawry and plotting, a fate by the way, which was richly deserved.

LAWRENCE SINCLAIR—An honest workman at the Star Steel Works.

MIKE CARROLL—With the wit of Ireland at his tongue tip. He aided in solving a baffling mystery.

LUCETTE—The beautiful girl, who for years was supposed to be the daughter of The Demon Doctor. Her real name, and birth, makes a thrilling chapter in this story.

CLARA BARNEY—Also a beautiful girl of mystery, whose identity has much to do with this tale.

CURLY BOB—Was a tough citizen, and he aided his fellow thus, Barney Driver, to the best of his ability.

OSCAR—A negro outlaw.

ALEXANDER GORDON—Whose bravery in a shipwreck, and his search for the missing dear ones the hungry waves did not engulf, ended in happiness.

CHAPTER I.

THE STRANGE LIGHT ON THE RIVER.

"Down brakes! Down brakes! Down br-a-a-akes!" shrieked the locomotive whistle.

"Down brakes!" responded the brakeman, as they flew to their posts and wildly turned the iron wheels controlling the mighty speed of the Night Express.

"Down brakes!" panted the fireman, in the cab of the engine, as he, too, lent his aid toward checking the train, and—

"Down brakes!" mutely joined in a living something stretched across the track of the B. & O. on that stormy December night.

It was a dark and dangerous place. Though only five or six miles from the heart of Pittsburg, it was as desolate as if it had been in the inmost fastnesses of the mountains which interpose their gigantic bulk between Eastern and Western Pennsylvania.

On one side a high, jagged cliff, the rocks preserving all the ugly angularities left by the giant powder used in blasting away for the railroad; on the other, the turbid, rushing waters of the Monongahela River, bearing on its bosom many a whisper of the rustic quietude in which it takes its rise, but yet seeking the busy hum of industry in the Smoky City with an eagerness very similar to that of the human delver for wealth in Pittsburg's murky precincts.

On the opposite side of the river a lurid glare, hooting up here and there against the inky blackness of the sky told that iron and steel mills were in operation, and that half-naked sons of Vulcan were literally earning bread for themselves and families by the sweat of their brows. Mingling with the noise of wind and rain the indescribable hum and roar which ever rises and falls in regular cadence in Pittsburg itself forced upon the notice and spoke of fortunes being made for the manufacturers and wages for the workmen.

"Down brakes!"

The locked wheels of the train grated on the rails; the engine, with the lever reversed by the engineer, struggled hard to overcome the momentum gathered from its previous swift flight, and the headlight threw a sickly glare over the form lying help-

less on the rocky road-bed with limbs stretched over the rails, as if courting a fearful, bloody death!

"What is it?" asked the engineer of his fireman, as the latter, with both hands on the brake-wheel, peered with starting eye-balls and bated breath into the night.

"It is a boy, I believe!"

"So it is! And we are on the down-grade. It will be a close call."

A score of heads were protruding from the car windows and the excitement was intense.

For the moment the fate of the helpless creature on the track was of more importance than that of nations. The passengers grasped the window ledges as if they would stop the train themselves by expending their strength on the insensate wood.

"See, he moves!" cried the fireman. "Ring the bell louder and whistle!"

"It is no use. Nothing can save him," returned the engineer. "We are right upon him."

The train had materially slackened its pace and a sulphurous smell arose from the track as the brakes, pressed hard down, prevented the wheels turning, and caused them to strike fire from the rails.

Forty yards more and the living sacrifice to the monster of iron and steel would be consummated.

"No good, talking, Jim!" said the fireman. "I ain't going to see that boy crushed to death! I believe I can save him!" and, like a cat, the fireman climbed out of the cab, crept swiftly along the side of the locomotive, where the throbbing of the immense driving-wheels hardly kept pace with that of his own heart, and reached the cow-catcher. The engine was very close now, and the fireman hardly had time to reach down and grasp the boy with a side fling, ere the spot where he had lain was half the length of the train behind!

But the deed was accomplished, somehow, and the unknown was safe!

Just as the fireman flung the boy from the track, a tall figure sprung out from behind an old wooden shanty which stood, and still stands, at the side of the B. & O. Railroad track at that particular point—a man of perhaps forty years of age, with swarthy countenance and strongly-marked features. His square chin was covered, though not concealed, by a thick growth of grizzled beard, while his strong white teeth gleamed from beneath a heavy mustache. His dress was that of a mill man, while his large, muscular hands and stubby fingers seemed to indicate that he was familiar with the use of heavy tools and powerful machinery.

"Curse their smartness!" he hissed. "They have upset all my arrangements, and I shall have to do everything over again."

He stooped and raised the boy in his arms as he spoke, and, throwing him over his shoulder, strode down the bank to the river.

He cast the boy, with no gentle hand, into the bottom of a skiff which was bobbing up and down against a cluster of wooden piles. Then, stepping in himself, he shoved off into the river and waited for the people on the train to finish their investigation.

"Lord how it *does* rain!" muttered the man, as he pulled his coat closer around him. "And it is as dark as a grave. I'll have trouble over this night's work as sure as my name is Barney Driver. I shall get the rheumatism, if nothing worse; that is certain."

The train had stopped and several of the crew were searching the side of the track for the boy who had had so narrow an escape. Up and down they walked, swinging their lanterns and inspecting every inch of the ground where he was likely to be.

Not a vestige of him could they find. He had vanished completely!

It puzzled the trainmen, but a Night Express must be on time, and they did not stay long when they found that their search was fruitless.

In a few minutes the conductor sung out "All aboard!" a lantern gave the signal to the engineer, and the B. & O. Express was once more on its way to Pittsburg, the red light on the rear car throwing a long streak of color on the wet rails behind, that looked like newly-spilled blood.

"So. It has gone!" said Barney Driver to himself. "Now for this brat! If that engineer had not been provided with good eyesight it would have been all over by this time, and no one would have been any the wiser. If I only dared to throw him overboard. But no; it would be too dangerous. The other plan was the best. Just a case of walking on the track; a hasty inquest; no one to identify the remains; burial by the city, and Barney Driver all right. I might give it up and let him stay with me, perhaps. But no, no; I couldn't stand *that!* He must die. That is the only thing to do, as far as *he* is concerned."

It had stopped raining, and one feeble star could be distinguished peeping through the heavy banks of clouds, as if it were a pitying eye fixed on the still form in the bottom of the boat.

The boy seemed conscious of this inquest, for he stirred slightly and opened his eyes.

Barney Driver heard the movement and dropped on his knees to peer into the young face.

"Oh, I am so tired!" said the boy, wearily. "Where am I? I feel as if I were being rocked in a cradle, as mother used to rock me, years ago!"

"Shut your mouth, you fool!" was Barney Driver's unsympathetic response, "or I'll give you a different kind of rock. I'll slug you!"

The boy forced himself into a sitting position and looked straight into the eyes of Barney Driver.

"What do you mean to do with me? And how is it I am in a boat alone, with you, in the middle of the night?"

"You are in the boat because I put you in, and how you came to be walking on the track in the middle of the night you know better than I can tell you. What is your name?" asked Barney.

The boy hesitated a moment and then replied, as if with difficulty: "Frank Trenton."

"Where are you from?"

"New York."

"How did you get here?"

"Walked."

"What did you come for?"

"Work."

"Have you learned any trade?"

"No, but I am willing to turn my hand to anything."

"Well, there are plenty of places in Pittsburg where a strong healthy boy can get work, and—"

"Bang! bang!"

Two deafening reports sounded from underneath the boat, and at the same moment a blinding flash of light glared in Barney Driver's eyes.

Ere he could recover his breath the light was gone and all was darkness as before.

"What was that?" he spluttered, with an air of bravado.

The only answer was the soughing of the wind and the splashing of the big rain-drops in the boat. The storm, which had for a few minutes lessened in violence, increased once more as if it would annihilate the skiff and its two passengers.

The boy had fallen back again and the rain was beating upon his upturned face and washing his clustering curls from his forehead.

"He's gone again!" said Barney. "Chloroform will fix them, every time, when properly administered. I have a good mind to pitch him overboard now. There could not be much danger in it. No one knows I am here, and even if they did and the worst came to worst I could say that it was an accident. Something must be done quickly one way or the other. I don't want to stay here in the rain. I have been pretty nearly struck by lightning once and that is enough. That stroke just now was too close to be comfortable."

The boat had drifted into the middle of the river by this time and had gone down with the current until the roar of the locks could be heard distinctly above the noise of the storm.

"Hallo! I don't want to be seen by those fellows at the lock," said Barney. "That would give my scheme away, completely."

He picked up a pair of oars which lay by the side of the boy and commenced to pull up-stream, muttering to himself meanwhile:

"I feel sure that boy saw me at Sing Sing, and that he will give me away if he ever gets a chance. I have no desire to put in another three years in the 'jug.' I had a close shave in getting out of it, and I mean to stay out, if possible. Then there is this little thing too."

He let go of the oar on his left, and grasping it with his right hand, steadied the right-hand oar with his elbow. With his disengaged left hand he drew a ring from his pocket.

"A diamond and worth $500 at least. I wonder where he got it? Not honestly, I feel sure. Then why haven't I as much right to it as him? I'm going to keep it, anyhow."

He was so much absorbed in the contemplation of the jewel that he did not notice a light dancing up and down within a few yards of his boat to the left. The light seemed to be floating in mid-air, about five feet above the water, and its colors changed from white to red, then to blue, yellow, and finally to white again, but a white of much greater brilliancy than at first.

What could it be?

There was no sound, as of a boat, being rowed in the vicinity, and the storm had lulled again, so that the splash of oars and the ripple of a boat's keel could have been heard plainly if it had existed.

Still the light shone and moved up and down as if borne on the crest of the huge waves or by a being walking on the river.

Nearer and nearer it came until, with a start, Barney Driver saw it.

He fell back, with jaws and eyes distended, while the oars, released from his hold, slipped out of the oarlocks and floated away on the surface of the water.

"There it is again!" he gasped, while the cold sweat burst out upon his forehead and his whole form became convulsed as if in a spasm. "It is always a sign of bad luck for me! What *can* it be? If I ever find out that some fellow has been playing a trick on me, I'll—I'll— By gracious! It is gone!"

Boom! sounded the big bell from City Hall, its deep note coming distinctly to Barney's ears as he looked around him.

"Three o'clock! I must get this job over! It is only a boy, after all. And, who knows? Perhaps he will get out and jump the town. I'll give him the chance."

He stooped and raised the inanimate form of the lad in his arms. Standing up and bracing his feet firmly, he threw his victim clear off the boat into the river.

There was a loud splash, and at the same moment, a flood of light burst over the scene, while a giant hand seized Barney by the throat and bore him into the bottom of his boat.

As he was forced irresistibly back, he saw the form of a singular being, nearly seven feet high, wrapped in a black cloak and with a black skull-cap perched on top of his white hair, while from the middle of his chest gleamed the light which illuminated everything within a dozen yards of it, and added to the unearthly look of its wearer. The being had a long, sharp nose, and piercing black eyes, which, under their heavy eyebrows seemed to vie with the brilliancy of the mysterious light emitted from his chest.

As Barney struggled in the powerful clasp of the bony fingers, e shrieked as one in mortal terror: *"The Demon Doctor!"*

Then the light vanished as suddenly as it had appeared, and Barney found himself alone in the middle of the river, save for the corpse-like face of the boy, which glided down the stream a dozen yards from the boat.

CHAPTER II.

FRANK TRENTON'S MYSTERIOUS POWER.

Work was in full swing at the Star Steel Works on the morning after the events narrated in the last chapter. The day had broken clear and cold and the five hundred men employed in the mill were working with a will.

Huge masses of white hot steel were being passed backward and forward through the rolls, by men, who, with their long iron tongs, seemed to manipulate the hissing metal as easily as if it were molasses candy. Each time it was put through the rolls it came out longer and thinner, until at last it only needed a few finishing touches to make it a perfect rail, ready to take its place as part of a railway in any quarter of the globe.

"Faith! an' it's meself ez would loike to be goin' to the picnic beyant," said Mike Carroll, as he helped to draw a bar of the hot steel from the last roll.

"What are you talking about?" gruffly asked Barney Driver, who was in charge of the rolls. "It seems to me you are always wanting to go to picnics. It is a pity you have anything else to do. As for me, I find my work takes all my time, without thinking of picnics."

Mike Carroll winked comically to a companion who stood near him, taking care that Barney Driver did not see the action, however, as he replied:

"Ah, thin, Mr. Droiver, a picnic in Dacimber w'u'd be a moighty cowld sport; but I belave as it w'u'd be for the binefit of yer sowl and body if ye did take more divarsion. Ye'd feel better for it, and—"

"Curse you, what are you doing?" interrupted Barney, as Mike accidentally dug him in the ribs with the handle of his tongs.

Mike tried to apologize, but his sense of humor overcame his desire to molify Barney and he burst out laughing at the ridiculous figure cut by the latter as he danced around with pain.

Like a flash, Barney seized a heavy sledge-hammer, swung it around his head, and was about to bring it down upon poor Mike's shoulders, when the terrible weapon was caught by some one behind and the blow was prevented.

With another oath Barney turned quickly around, and looked into the pale face of Frank Trenton, the boy he had thrown into the Monongahela River a few hours before!

"Where—where—did *you* come from?" he asked, as his own swarthy face turned almost as pale as the boy's.

"Never mind. Put your hammer down and go on with your work. I am employed in this mill. I have just been engaged. If you want to ask me any questions you will have plenty of opportunity in the future."

There was an air of quiet command about the boy, very different to his timid manner while in the boat the night before, and Barney obeyed him mechanically.

Then Frank Trenton went to work assisting at the rolls in another part of the large room doing the best his rather limited strength would allow, and soon making himself popular by the willingness he evinced to render himself useful.

Barney Driver looked across to the boy from time to time with an expression of mystification, that showed how he was puzzled by the appearance of his supposed victim alive and in apparent good health.

"What can it mean?" he asked himself a score of times through the day, as the steel bars, like red-hot tongues, protruded from the jaws of the iron monsters, that were chewing them into a merchantable commodity.

He was utterly unable to answer his own question, and he knew it was of no use asking his helper, Mike Carroll, for that worthy was not troubling himself about anything beyond getting through his day's work, with the prospect of a glass of beer at the end of it.

Barney Driver was not popular with the men in the Star Steel Works. He was gruff in manner, and there were strange tales afloat concerning him. It was said that he dabbled in chemistry and that he believed in spiritualism and clairvoyance. He had himself boasted one day that he had killed his man, and he had a peculiar swagger which his enemies declared he could only have acquired in a penitentiary.

Still, he was a big, powerful man, and he forced a sort of negative respect from his associates.

There was another whisper about Barney Driver, however, that was, in the estimation of his fellow workmen, more serious than any other imputation that could be cast upon him.

He was said to secretly advocate non union principles. Though perforce a member of the "Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steel Workers," because he could not have otherwise worked in a Pittsburg mill, it was claimed that his record was a shady one, and that he only waited a fair opportunity to betray his fellow-workmen. Out of his hearing he was almost invariably spoken of as "Barney, the Blacksheep."

In a large factory like the Star Mill there were necessarily many types of character among the employees. They were not all Barney Drivers.

One young fellow who worked not far from Barney, and who was the very opposite in disposition and appearance, was named Lawrence Sinclair.

Sinclair was tall, lithe and graceful, with a world of strength in his sinewy limbs, and with courage enough to use his strength in defense either of himself or a friend, if need be. Straight, regular features, piercing blue eyes, and short, blonde curls clustering on his high forehead bespoke one of nature's noblemen, even through the soot and grime gathered in the course of a day's work in the mill.

Everybody liked Lawrence Sinclair. There was an openness, a rough-and-ready good nature about the young fellow that irresistibly attracted people to him, and there were few men in the Star Mill who would not have stood by him to the last drop of blood.

There was one person, however, whom Lawrence Sinclair cordially disliked—Barney Driver. Not without cause, either. There were good reasons for the feeling. What these reasons were may appear later on.

Lawrence Sinclair had witnessed the episode of the hammer, and had admired the promptitude with which the pale-faced boy had interfered to prevent bloodshed.

"You have lots of pluck, young one," said Sinclair, as the lad walked past.

"Have I?" was the cool rejoinder.

"That's what. Don't you know Barney Driver is a bad man?"

"He is not bad enough to hurt me. I don't fear him, and he knows it."

"Have you met him before?"

"Yes."

"Where?"

"'Tend to your own affairs, Sinclair," interposed the gruff voice of "Barney, the Blacksheep," at this juncture. "The boy

is an old friend of mine, or I would not have let him stop me from licking that fellow. You ought to have guessed that."

Sinclair did not reply, but he exchanged a look with Barney Driver, as the latter returned to his work, that meant trouble in the future.

"All right, Trenton," said Sinclair. "Go to your work, but let me see you at quitting time. I want to talk to you."

The boy quietly resumed his labors and Sinclair walked away.

All day the business of the mill went on, and at six o'clock the men on the day turn gave up their places to those who were to keep the insatiate jaws of the rolls occupied through the night.

Frank Trenton felt weary as he stepped over to the long trough where the day men, each with his own towel thrown over his shoulder, were scouring some of the marks of their day's labor from face, neck and hands.

"Well, young one, how do you feel now?" asked the cheery voice of Lawrence Sinclair, as he splashed into the water in the trough and sluiced himself from the crown of his head to the middle of the chest, regardless of his wet shirt. "How do you like working in the Star Mill?"

Frank Trenton removed the black from his face and hands as well as he could, and looking up into the face of his friend, replied with a faint smile:

"I am rather tired."

"Dare say you are. It's hard work when you are not used to it, particularly to a little chap like you. Where are you boarding?"

"I haven't got a boarding-house yet. I only came to Pittsburg this morning."

"That's so? Then come home with me. My mother has a room that will just suit you. It isn't very big, but then—you are not very big either. I've kind of taken a liking to you, and I don't want to see you get in with the gang here. I am afraid they are rather too rough for you."

Ten minutes later, Lawrence Sinclair and Frank Trenton were standing in the parlor of the former's house, while a motherly woman, the Widow Sinclair, was telling her son's new friend that he was heartily welcome, and that she would try to make him as comfortable as possible.

"Then let's have supper, mother. That's the first thing," said Lawrence, heartily. "Frank is pretty well played out by his first day's work in the mill."

"Begorra, yes, an' it's meself that's played out too wid running after him," broke in the voice of Mike Carroll, as the Irishman appeared in the doorway. "Barney Driver wants to sp'ake wid ye, an' he towld me to ask ye to go out beyant, me little lad. An' it's hurryin' ye'd better be, too, for Barney isn't in the best of timpers, d'ye moind."

Lawrence broke forth with a sudden invective.

"Lawrence," said his mother in warning tones.

"Yes, mother, I beg your pardon; but that man makes me so mad with his domineering ways that I can hardly help breaking out sometimes," returned Lawrence.

"Where is he?" asked Frank Trenton of Mike Carroll.

"Down the road a piece," was the reply. "I'll take ye to him in a pig's whisper if you're ready," said Mike.

"Come on, then!" said Frank, and before Lawrence or his mother could say a word in remonstrance, he was gone, closely followed by Mike.

"What does this mean!" said Mrs. Sinclair. "Who is this boy?"

"I don't know, mother. There is some mystery about it, and I intend to find out what it is. That boy is too young and innocent to be a friend of Barney the Blacksheep, and if there is any foul play in the matter, I'll make it hot for that big villain as sure as my name is Lawrence Sinclair."

Mrs. Sinclair walked to the window, but all was darkness outside. She stood looking out into the night, however, for two or three minutes, while her son dropped into a chair with an air of weariness.

"Curse you!" rung out the deep voice of Barney Driver. "I'll finish you, *this* time!"

Lawrence Sinclair sprung to his feet.

"Look, Lawrence!" cried Mrs. Sinclair, excitedly. "Come to the window, *quick!*"

Her son rushed to the window and looked out, while his frame thrilled with excitement at the sight that met his gaze.

A bright light illuminated the hitherto pitch-dark road, and shone full on the figure of Barney Driver, half-recumbent in the dust, while Frank Trenton bent over him, grasping his wrist and apparently whispering in his ear.

On the face of Barney was a look of horror, as if he were under some supernatural influence.

Even as they looked, the light suddenly disappeared, and the next minute Frank Trenton burst into the room, pale and breathless, and sunk on the floor in a deadly faint.

CHAPTER III.

THE PLOT THICKENS.

In a lonely house that stood in a hollow near the crest of the gigantic cliff, four hundred feet high, overlooking the seething city of Pittsburg, and known as Mount Washington, was a man, sitting in a dimly-lighted room. Save for the shaded lamp, whose light fell only on an outspread parchment on the table, which he was earnestly perusing, there was nothing to relieve the almost tomb-like darkness of the apartment.

It was about two hours after the events narrated in the last chapter.

The reader kept his eyes fastened on his paper, resting his forehead in his two hands, and seemed almost entirely absorbed by the queer characters of his manuscript.

With a deep sigh he raised his head, so that his features were revealed in the light of the lamp.

It was the Demon Doctor!

At the first glance one can see that he is a student. His high, pale forehead, from which is pushed back a clustering mass of white hair; his dark, thoughtful eyes, flashing like coals of fire in cavernous recesses beneath heavy eyebrows, and his pensive but firm mouth, the outlines of which are not concealed by the mustache that droops on each side to mingle with the flowing beard.

"Strange," mutters the Demon Doctor, "very strange."

He rises from his seat and paces the room, which, as one becomes accustomed to the dimness, is seen to be stored with books, manuscripts, oddly-shaped instruments of brass, leather, wood and glass—the latter substance, being distorted into every conceivable form in vials, retorts, alembics, and the thousand-and-one vessels used by chemists. A galvanic battery stands on a small table in a corner, while a human skeleton grins from a closet, the curtain in front of which has been accidentally pushed aside. A stuffed crocodile hangs from the ceiling, showing that the occupant of the room has that delight in oddities which was so characteristic of the searchers for the unknowable in long dead-and-gone centuries.

He is a man of almost gigantic stature. When he stands up to his full height he is at least six feet eight inches in height, with a broad, sturdy frame, that looks capable of withstanding the assaults of two ordinary men.

"Strange!" he repeats, as he paces slowly to and fro. "With all my study, extending over my whole life, of the mystic forces of nature, I am still obliged to employ a boy whose life I could crush out in my hand, as I would an eggshell, to assist me in running down a vulgar thief! My erudition, which I have burned my brain for years to acquire, does not assist me in fixing a crime on a man whom I more than suspect of being the perpetrator. Strange—strange!"

He walked up and down for several minutes, cogitating deeply.

"Father!"

A sweet voice that of a young girl. It made the Doctor start, while a smile of affection drove the preoccupied look from his face.

The door had opened, and the girl stood in the shadows in a distant corner, in a hesitating manner, as if she were afraid of intruding on the studies of her father.

"Come in, Lucette. I am not busy. Come in, my daughter," said the Demon Doctor, as he stepped toward the young girl, took her by the hand and kissed her. "I am expecting that boy this evening who is helping me to get back your mother's jewels. A bright boy he is, too, but a mere boy physically. If I had not happened to be on the river last night, I am afraid he would have found a grave at the bottom of the Monongahela, then."

"How good you are, father! You always seem to be in the right place at the right time," said the girl, with an admiring glance at her father's face.

"Good!" laughed the Demon Doctor. "Well, I don't know. I should have been very bad if I had not put out my hand to save a helpless boy from a terrible death. Don't you think so, dear?"

"Listen, father."

"What do you hear?"

The young girl was looking through a window that, entirely unshaded, showed that the darkness without was of inky blackness.

"I thought I heard a light tap at the window," said Lucette, straining her eyes in the endeavor to penetrate the thick pall of night outside.

Tap, tap, tap!

The girl was right. There was somebody outside, signaling the inmates of the room.

"We'll soon see who it is, daughter," said the Demon Doctor, as he stepped to a corner of the room and placed his hand against the wall.

Instantly a powerful blue reflection shone over the hitherto black space outside the window and clearly defined every object.

A clear space of perhaps fifty feet extended from the window to a high, cinderous bank that shut off the view entirely on that side. In the bank, to the right, was a hole, about four feet square, leading apparently into the bowels of the earth.

The space between the houses and the bank was rough and uneven, with huge masses of slate and rock lying here and there, the whole scene being suggestive of former activity, when coal was mined to the extent of hundreds of tons daily, and sent to feed the home fires and manufacturing furnaces of towns and cities in every part of the continent.

But this activity had long since ceased, and the hole in the bank was now only one of the many means of ingress and egress to the resort of lawless characters who found the disused coal mines of Mount Washington a comparatively safe hiding-place.

"I do not see anybody, father," said Lucette, as she looked through the window in all directions, "but I am sure I heard some one tap."

The Demon Doctor smiled grimly, as he walked to the side of his daughter and placed his foot on a certain bright red flower that stood forth conspicuously in the nearly obliterated pattern of the well-worn carpet.

A howl of pain arose from the outside, as a man jumped up from beneath the window and stood with a ludicrous expression of dismay on his face, looking at Lucette and her father.

"Electricity is a very useful thing—eh, Lucette?" said the Demon Doctor. "Go to your room, my dear. I must talk to this man alone."

Lucette quietly obeyed her father and retired, as he opened the window, and motioned to the visitor to come in.

The latter, without a word, stepped through the opening, and sat down in the Doctor's chair where the light from the student lamp shone full on his face and showed the sullen features of Barney Driver.

The Demon Doctor pressed the wall in the corner, and the blue light disappeared leaving the darkness outside as black as before.

"Well, professor," said Barney, "I am here, as I told you I would be, and I want you to come right down to business. And I may as well tell you that I mean to claim damages from you for assaulting me last night on the river, when I was attending strictly to my own business, and just enjoying a little fishing. You scared me nearly to death, too. You are always playing those sort of tricks. Hanged if I don't believe you *are* a demon anyhow."

The Demon Doctor smiled contemptuously.

"I am nothing more than a student of natural forces, and when I show the people that electricity will give them powers beyond anything dreamed of by writers of fairy tales, they shake their heads in holy horror, and call me a demon or a crank."

The Demon Doctor spoke musingly, and evidently was only thinking aloud.

Barney Driver wriggled impatiently in his chair.

"Well, never mind about this," he said. "Let us get down to business."

"I am listening."

"You know I told you some time ago that I had a secret which I would sell to you at a reasonable rate—a secret about——"

"About my daughter! Well?"

"Your daughter, eh?" repeated Barney, with a coarse laugh. "Well, yes, all right; if you like to call her your daughter, I don't object, of course. She certainly ain't *my* daughter."

There was a dangerous gleam in the Demon Doctor's dark eyes for a second, but Barney did not see it, as he continued:

"We know—you and I—that this young girl, Lucette, ain't any more your daughter than she is mine. *You* don't know whose she is. I do. It will cost you just $12,000 to become as wise as I am. I can get $10,000 for the information in another quarter. That is why I ask you twelve."

"You are candid," observed the Demon Doctor.

"Yes, and I am also a man of my word. If you don't settle this business with me to-night, the other party will get the chance, and you may say good-by to your *daughter*," with ironical emphasis on the word.

"Twelve thousand dollars is a good deal of money," said the Demon Doctor, slowly.

"Certainly; but when you consider that there is a cool million coming to that girl when it is proved who she is, it don't seem so much; now, does it? You see, all you have to do is to be appointed her guardian, which you can easily manage. She has an uncle who will try to head you off in that; but you can get that all settled in court beforehand, and he will be helpless. Then, with papers that I have, and that I will turn over to you for and in consideration of the sum of $12,000—as the lawyers say—you can prove the girl's identity, help her to get her fortune, and take your own comfortable little slice of it as her guardian."

"How do I know that you have the information you pretend?"

"I won't ask you for a cent until you have full proof."

"And if I refuse to buy this precious secret, what then?" asked the Demon Doctor, gazing sternly into the other's face. "By your own admission, my daughter will secure her name and fortune whether I pay you anything or not, because you will sell the secret to her uncle if you do not close a bargain with me. Are you not afraid of my kicking you out of the house, for daring to come here with a proposition that I should become my daughter's legal guardian, for the sake of securing part of her fortune?"

"Don't get mad, professor," protested Barney. "It won't help things any, and I am not afraid of you. Now, what is your answer to me—yes or no?"

Before the Demon Doctor could reply, the door was thrown open and Lucette stood in the entry, while her clear, ringing voice uttered the single word, "*Yes!*"

Barney Driver grinned triumphantly.

"Lucette," said her father, warningly.

"Father, I have heard all. How can you suppose that I would ever leave *you?* As for the money, why would it not belong to you as much as to me? Pay this man what he demands, if you must, but never listen to any proposition that might separate me from you—the only friend I have on earth."

She threw her arms around the neck of the Demon Doctor, and kissed him affectionately.

"Well, when will you bring me these proofs?" he asked, turning toward Barney.

"To-morrow night. Is it a bargain?"

"No!" shouted a voice, as the window was thrown open, and Frank Trenton sprung into the room.

With a yell of rage, Barney Driver half-sprung from his chair, as if to rush upon the pale-faced boy, who stood breathlessly, but defiantly, just inside the window.

He made only one step, and then—stopped!

He seemed to be rooted to the carpet, while his face working with baffled rage, expressed the evil emotions of his mind. Some mysterious power was keeping him in check, and he was evidently as helpless as a child.

It was a weird picture. The darkened room, with the shaded rays of the lamp falling over the table; the tall, stately form of the Demon Doctor, as he stood watching the writhing, impotent rascal, Barney; the beautiful young girl, in an attitude half of surprise, half of terror; and the slight, delicate boy, Frank Trenton, standing with dilated nostrils and flashing eyes, like the incarnation of retribution, ready to brave even death in the carrying out of a sacred purpose.

"You must remember that in my own house I am absolutely king, Barney Driver," said the Demon Doctor. "I will release you on condition that you sit down again."

Barney nodded slightly in assent. He evidently was powerless to make more than a mere shadow of a movement.

The Demon Doctor, as far as could be seen, did not do anything. Yet he, in some manner known only to himself, released the baffled ruffian from the subtle electrical influence that had held him prisoner, and motioned him to his chair.

"Now, Barney Driver, I have a word to say to you," said Frank Trenton. "It is my turn to dictate terms to you. We are not in the middle of the river now, alone in a boat. I am not afraid of you murdering me, and I charge you with being concerned in the robbery of the Eighth National Bank of Albany New York, and, moreover, with being an escaped convict from Sing Sing Prison."

The Demon Doctor and Lucette looked in astonishment at the boy. Who was this mere child, who seemed to know the criminal secrets of the whole country by heart?

Barney Driver sat in his chair looking fixedly at Frank Trenton, evidently trying to hold down his rage. At last he burst forth:

"You lie!"

"I speak the truth," returned the boy, quietly. "You know I do."

Barney Driver tried to laugh derisively, but the attempt was a failure.

"Listen," said the boy, as he stepped to the side of Barney, while the Demon Doctor kept a watchful eye on the latter, ready to thwart any treacherous movement. "You have recognized me as——"

Barney Driver looked up quickly, with a horrified glance that seemed to see in the face of the boy something that he had not observed before. Then he stammered, as if in a dream:

"Deadhold, the Kid Detective!"

The next minute there was a crash of glass, as, at a single bound, Barney sprung through the window, carrying the sash with him.

CHAPTER IV.

MIKE CARROLL'S FRIENDLY VISIT.

"Be jabers, now, Mr. Sinclair, it's as dark in these ould toonnels as the t'roat uv a black cat. Bad 'cess to it! Why did me mother's son iver coom on sich an expedition. It bees no place for a dacent mon, onyhow. You can just bet the boots off yez that it's niver Moike Carroll as'll be prowling around here ag'in unless very pertickler bisness drags him in out of the daylight beyant."

"Don't grumble so, Mike. We are getting along all right. It won't take us long to get through, and if we find what we are looking for it will be well worth all the trouble it costs us."

The speaker was Lawrence Sinclair, who, with Carroll, was groping through a passage in the great worked-out coal mines that honeycomb Mount Washington.

The two men had a purpose in view as will appear in due time.

It was the night which, as we have seen, was such an awful one for Barney Driver and Frank Trenton—or "Deadhold," as Barney had called him.

The "Kid Detective" had given his friend Sinclair a hint concerning Barney which had led to the exploration of the mysterious mines through which, with the good-natured little Irishman, he was now making his way.

"I tell you, Mike," went on Lawrence, "we shall catch Mr. Barney this time, and hold him up to the world in his true light, or I am very badly out in my calculations."

"An' sure that's a thing yez niver are, Mr. Sunclair, as I've often towld yez. An' be the same token, I guess you're roight about us soon coming across the spalpeen we're a-lookin' for, because—Whist! Phat's that?"

Mike had started and grasped Sinclair's arm, dropping his lantern, as he pointed into the gloom that stretched ahead of them into the unknown.

"What is it, Mike? I can't see anything except darkness."

"You can't?"

"No."

"Then you're loocky; for, be the ghost of me grandmither, I saw a loight, sort o' streaky loike, kim across the blackness beyant that wuz as red as a hot steel rail, wid the foire sticking out uv it."

"Pooh! Your imagination runs away with you, Mike. We are all alone in this part of the mine. The gang never come out this way. Pick up your lantern and come along. We are not near the place yet."

Mike obeyed, but he shook his head doubtfully as he lighted the wick of his lantern from that of his companion.

"Oh! Howly Moses! There it is ag'in!"

He dropped the lantern with a muffled shriek as with trembling fingers he directed Sinclair's attention to the appearance that had frightened him so much before.

There was no mistake about it now.

A lurid reflection that brought into angry relief the rugged, seamed, splintered masses of slate from which the soft bituminous coal had long since been taken. It made the ruinous scene one of fantastic shapes and dancing shadows. It gave an atmosphere of supernatural warmth and life to the desolation and decay which generally reigned in this dismal underground region. It cast flickering points of glowing fire on every side. It seemed to place a Presence in the echoing passages that was not of this world.

Lawrence stood, irresolute, for a moment, as he tried to account for the strange appearance.

He and Mike Carroll had entered the mine about half-way up the face of the cliff at a small aperture that was hidden by a pile of scrap-iron, accumulated for years from the great iron mill at the foot of the precipice, and he knew that the secret rendezvous of the band of outlaws for which he was looking, and in which he more than expected to find Barney Driver, must be at least a quarter of a mile distant through the winding passages.

"Come along, Mike. We'll soon find out who is playing tricks on us," he said, at last, as he dashed toward the light, closely followed by his companion.

Even as he spoke, the mine became densely black, as before.

"Sure the ould Jack-o'-Lantern has put a stoong-wisher on the head uv him," said Mike. "But I'm fearin' that there's throuble forninst us, and——"

Crash, came a heavy body against him, and the Irishman's observations were cut short by his being sent spinning several yards over the rough stones that formed the flooring of the passage.

At the same instant Lawrence Sinclair's lantern was knocked from his hand, and everything was in utter darkness.

The young man stretched his hands and grasped at the blackness at random.

"Who is this?" demanded Sinclair, sternly, as he felt some unknown person in his clutch.

A smothered oath was the only reply, as the stranger tore himself away and plunged into the thick opaque gloom that overhung all.

"Och, Mr. Sunclair, I'm kilt intoirely. The murtherin' villain hasn't left a parfect bone in me hull body, so he hasn't," wailed Mike. "Sure, be St. Pathrick, there seems to be a million uv jagged shtones a-rinnin' intil the back uv me."

"Never mind, Mike; you shall get even with him yet," said Lawrence Sinclair, as he relighted his lantern, and lifted the disgruntled Irishman to his feet. "We must see this thing through, now. I suppose it was one of the gang, who didn't want us to recognize him. It is only one more proof that their meeting-place is somewhere in the mines. And I'll find it tonight," he added, with sudden fierceness, "if it means death to me. Come along."

"Yes, that's all roight; but me fri'nd, it's only roight that I should inform yez that I ain't ready to pass in me chicks at this prisint moment, if you are," grumbled Mike Carroll.

"Hush! What's that ahead?"

"Where?"

"Just behind that column of slate, right in the light of my lantern."

"It looks loike a——"

"A man?"

"No! The saints purtect us! A divil!" stammered Mike, his superstitious fears completely overcoming him.

"Pshaw! It was a colored man, that's all. He has gone, too. There are more holes and burrows in this hill than in a rabbit warren. Follow me!"

Without another word, Lawrence Sinclair dashed forward to the spot on which the stranger had stood a moment before, but—was he gone.

A low, narrow passage turned sharply to the right.

Lawrence Sinclair unhesitatingly entered it, with Mike close on his heels.

Twenty yards brought them to the end. It was evidently only an abandoned "room," as the spaces in which the diggers work are called in mining parlance.

"I towld yez he wuz a divil. He kim in here, so he did, an' now he's gone as clean as a whistle—wint roight through the thick wall, be the powers! Say, Mr. Sunclair!"

"Well?"

"I'm a-goin' home," said Mike Carroll, solemnly. "I towld yez I'd help yez put your hond on the gang in this unchristian place, an' I'd like to kape me wurrd, but I'll be choked if I want to fight fellers as jump through walls an' wears horns an' a tail on them."

"Well, all right, Mike. Go home. I'll see it through by myself, if you're afraid."

This last word stuck in Mike Carroll's throat and dispelled all his apprehensions as if by magic.

"Afraid, is it, Mr. Sunclair? And did ez iver know of an Irishman that was afraid? I'll go wid yez, begorra, if it's to Halifax or Jericho. I'm with yez, Mr. Sunclair, an' here's me hond on it."

Lawrence shook hands heartily with his impulsive companion, and then proceeded to reconnoiter the "room" from which the negro had so strangely disappeared.

"There don't seem any possibility of his having gone out, and yet, since he isn't here, after most certainly coming in, he must have escaped somehow," said Lawrence.

"No doubt about it," added Mike, with sententious gravity.

"Here, we start with that boy, Trenton, to run down a gang of thieves in the mines, that he seems to know all about, somehow, though I cannot imagine how he found it out. Then he suddenly leaves us to keep another appointment, but promises to join us here. Now, where is he? I hope he hasn't got into any trouble. He is such a weak little fellow, in spite of his smartness, that I would hardly like to trust him in a hard crowd."

"Ye wouldn't, eh? Faith, an' I don't see why ye should be a-worriting about him, ayther. He didn't back down much at the mill to-day, when that big omadhaun of a Barney Driver was goin' for me wid a hammer. I owe him wan for that, too, be the boye. Be jabers, the b'ye saved the loife uv me that toime!"

"Yes, he is a bright boy, but there is a mystery about him that I should like to solve. Of one thing I am convinced. He has come to this part of the country for something more than to merely get a living," returned Lawrence, while carefully examining every inch of the walls, floor and ceiling of the "room."

Suddenly he uttered an exclamation of triumph as he held his lantern high over his head and fixed his eyes upon a certain spot in the uneven wall of slate and rock before him.

"Look, Mike!"

"Phwat?"

"There is the secret of the colored man's escape."

"Phwere?"

"Do you see that crack running along the wall about a foot from the top?"

"Yis."

"And do you see two other cracks, up and down, about a yard apart?"

"Faith, an' I do."

"That's a door," said Lawrence Sinclair, quietly but confidently.

"A dure?"

"Yes, sir."

"An' how d'ye know? Sure yez wuz never here before, wuz ye?" asked Mike, wonderingly.

"Never. But I feel sure that I am right notwithstanding. However, we can soon test it."

The young man jumped on the loose masses of slate that had crumbled from the wall and placing his feet in fissures and holes that formed a natural ladder, reached the crack near the roof that he had pronounced a door.

Mike Carroll and he reached the crack at the same instant, for there was plenty of foothold, and the Irishman's love of adventure would not allow him to remain in the background now that he did not suspect any supernatural agency at work.

"Be jabers! I hear some one shpaking," said Mike, in an excited whisper.

"Hush! We must not be caught just now. That colored man thinks we have lost track of him, evidently, and if we don't interfere with him I presume he won't disturb us. All we want now is to locate and identify the gang. If we do that we shall have gained the object of our night's work."

While speaking, Lawrence Sinclair was cautiously pulling at the mass of slate immediately below the horizontal crack. He judged, and rightly, that it would swing open like a door.

He soon made an aperture large enough to enable him to peer through into the space on the other side.

A glare of light dazzled his eyes and drew forth a stifled exclamation from Mike.

Sinclair stretched his hand warningly toward his companion, but Mike was too excited to notice it and only climbed a little higher, to get a better view of the scene before him.

It was a "room" similar to the one in which they stood, but was as comfortably furnished as many an apartment in a good boarding-house. Two cot-beds, several chairs and a large pine table were lighted up by an immense flame that issued from an ordinary gas pipe planted in the ground.

There were four occupants of the room.

One was a burly colored man—doubtless the individual that had brushed past Sinclair and Mike so unceremoniously. The others were a young man of perhaps twenty years of age, who, with his soft felt hat pulled over his eyes, had the unmistakable air of a "tough," and Barney Driver.

There was still another person present, the sight of whom had caused Lawrence Sinclair and Mike Carroll so much astonishment—a beautiful, refined young girl, none other than *the Demon Doctor's daughter, Lucette.*

"Phwat does that mean, Mr. Sinclair?" whispered Mike, as he raised himself a little more and leaned forward until half his body hung through the opening.

"Come back, Mike; they will see you," warned Lawrence, softly, as he gave Mike Carroll a pull.

The pull was intended to draw the Irishman out of danger, but it failed in its object. Mike involuntarily resisted, and leaned forward still further.

It was a fatal movement.

There was the sound of falling rubbish; a grinding, crashing, rumbling noise, and Lawrence Sinclair dropped back and rolled into the center of the empty "room," under a heap of broken slate and dust, while Mike pitched the other way, and landed with a tremendous bump and a characteristic exclamation, squarely in the middle of the pine table, among Barney Driver and his companions.

CHAPTER V.

A RESCUE STOPPED.

Barney Driver, the colored man, and the young "tough"—who, by the way, rejoiced in the cognomen of "Curly Bob"—started forward as Mike Carroll made his unceremonious *debut*, but as the Irishman sat perfectly unconcerned on the table, looking good-humoredly into the face of each man in turn, they all stopped and stared at the intruder with an expression of blank astonishment on their respective faces.

"Where did you come from?" said Barney Driver, at last, with a scowl.

"Phere did I kim from?" repeated Mike, who wanted to gain time to collect his thoughts. "Sure, it's meself that kin hardly tell yez. I jist dropped in as it were."

The frown on Barney Driver's brow grew black as he looked into the little Irishman's careless, smiling face.

"Get off that table," he commanded, sternly.

"Sart'inly. I beg the leddy's parding," returned Mike, pulling off his hat respectfully.

"Never mind the lady. I'll take care of her. You do as I tell you," was Barney's gruff response.

"Don't I always do as ye tell me—at the mill?"

"Yes, and you'll do it here, too, if you know what is good for yourself."

"Faix, and if I know what's good for meself, I think I'd be better off av I wasn't in this place, at all, at all."

"Shut up."

"I'm shut."

Mike sprung from the table, and dexterously contrived to alight at the side of Lucette.

A light, soft touch on his hand would have told him that she was in trouble, even had she not whispered, almost inaudibly, a single word:

"Help!"

"Get over to the other side of the room," said the harsh voice of Barney Driver, and Mike Carroll was hurled across the apartment by the powerful arm of the speaker so suddenly as to almost take away his breath.

"Sure an' ain't I on the ither soide?" said Mike, with a grin, adding to himself: "But I'll get that gurrul out o' this in spite of yer teeth, Mister Barney the Blackshape. Mark me wurruds."

He dropped upon the pile of slate that had fallen with him from the hole above, drew a short black pipe from his pocket, and after due preparation commenced to smoke.

"Curly Bob," and the colored man looked curiously from the Irishman to Barney, as if expecting orders to take some action.

The latter did not make any sign, however, and Mike was left unmolested.

Barney Driver was evidently the ruler in this underground kingdom. He was playing a desperate game; but then he was a desperate man, and he did not hesitate in the course he had marked out for himself. He would rather that Mike Carroll had not found him in a character—an outlaw—entirely different to that of the mill-worker, in which he had been accustomed to seeing him. But since he could not help it, he was prepared to face it out with the dogged courage peculiar to wild beasts and men without principle.

"Oscar!" he cried, suddenly.

"Sah!" returned the negro, as he stepped toward Barney.

The latter whispered something in Oscar's ear, and with a nod of intelligence the negro walked to the door, which, Mike noticed, was of solid, heavy beams and scantling, strengthened with bands and rivets of iron.

"Bob," said Barney, shortly.

Curly Bob, without a word followed the negro, and they both disappeared through the doorway, Barney carefully replacing the ponderous bar and two iron bolts that secured it from the inside.

It was noticeable that Barney Driver never removed his eyes from the face of Lucette while fastening the door. He evidently

expected that she would, if possible, enlist Mike Carroll in her service and he was determined to prevent it.

As for Mike he sat on his heap of slate, smoking as peacefully as if he was enjoying his noon hour rest at the mill.

Barney Driver seated himself on the table and grinned triumphantly at Lucette.

"What are you going to do with me?" asked the girl, at last, as Barney showed no intention of speaking.

"Sit down," was the gruff response.

Lucette obeyed, mechanically dropped into a chair that stood just behind her.

"I ain't going to do anything with you," continued Barney. "You don't suppose I go around killing women, do you? It was a lucky chance that I got hold of you, and I'm going to take advantage of it, of course. That's business. I can strike a better bargain, with old Lightning Rod, the Demon Doctor, as they call him, while I keep you out of sight d'ye see?"

"Villain!" gasped Lucette.

"Now, see here, young lady," said Barney Driver, savagely. "I don't want any talk of that kind from you. I wouldn't take it from a man, and I'm sure won't have it from a girl."

"Thrue for yez, Barney. You're a brave b've, Faix an' ye are. I believe yez c'u'd lick the gurrul wi' one hand, so I do," broke in Mike Carroll, who pushed down the tobacco in the bowl of his pipe with his little finger, and quietly resumed his smoking.

Barney Driver jumped from the table, seized a chair and hurled it with all his force at Mike.

The little Irishman expected some such demonstration; so he dodged the chair with a quick movement of his head.

At the same instant Lucette reached the door, and with almost superhuman strength, threw down the bar, shot back the bolts, and rushed into the corridor.

"Come back, or I'll kill you," yelled Barney, as he followed her a few steps.

Then he stopped, and with a chuckle and shrug of his shoulders, returned to the room.

"Hyar she is, boss. I thought she was gwine too fast, or I done 'suaded her to come back," said the voice of Oscar, as he appeared, holding Lucette firmly by the hand.

"Slipped up that time, eh?" said Barney, mockingly, as, the negro having again gone, the door was barred and bolted as before.

For five minutes no one spoke.

Mike Carroll smoked on undisturbed; Lucette sunk back in her chair in a sad reverie, and Barney, the Blacksheep, with knitted brows leaned against the wall, looking alternately at his two prisoners.

Suddenly there was a noise over the head of Mike Carroll, who, it will be remembered, was sitting immediately beneath the opening through which he had made his entry to the room.

Barney Driver looked up, and leveled a pistol at the spot with an oath.

Ere he could pull the trigger, Mike Carroll, quick as a flash, had picked up a piece of slate, and, with accurate aim, thrown it at the weapon.

There was a report, the sound of falling slate and dust, and Lawrence Sinclair bounded into the room from the opening, and flew at the throat of Barney the Blacksheep.

The onslaught was so sudden that the burly ruffian went down as if he had been hit by a cannon ball, with Lawrence Sinclair clutching his throat with a death-like grasp.

"Hurroo!" yelled Mike Carroll. "Choke the murtherin' villain, Mister Sinclair. Jist hould him till I git one paste at him."

Lucette started from her chair in affright, and glanced toward the door.

The combatants, however, were rolling over each other immediately in front of it, completely shutting off escape in that direction.

Barney Driver tried to speak, but the clutch of Lawrence Sinclair on his throat was tightening, and he could not utter any sound save a muffled groan.

Lucette had seen that some one sprung into the room, but the movement had been so sudden that she had not seen his features.

Now, as the two rolled over in a desperate struggle for the mastery, she saw the young man's face in the full glare of the gas-light that was still flaring from the pipe, and clasping her hands in a paroxysm of hope and fear, cried:

"Lawrence!"

The young man heard the word, and, excited as he was, a glow of pleasure overspread his pale face, and he gave Barney Driver's throat an extra squeeze that made that gentleman's eyeballs bulge still more.

Mike Carroll heard it too, and he screwed up two eyes with a knowing look as he muttered:

"Well, here's more in it. That must be Mr. Sinclair's gurrul, from the moighty familiar way she handles the name uv him."

The Irishman was dancing around the two men battling on the ground, as he sought an opportunity to help his friend by planting a decisive blow on Barney Driver's anatomy.

So far, however, he had not been able to distinguish one from the other in the dust and excitement.

Barney the Blacksheep was now growing perceptibly weaker. Though a much more powerful man than Lawrence Sinclair, the latter had gained such an advantage by clutching his throat at the first attack that it was evident the young man would eventually be the victor.

One more tightening of his clasp and it was evident to Lawrence that the assailant was helpless for the time being.

"So, Barney Driver, I think we have stopped your career for a few years," said Lawrence as he released his hold and arose to his feet.

"Miss Le Fevre!" he exclaimed, as he met the eye of Lucette, "what strange chance brings you to this place at this hour?"

"Oh, Law—Mr. Sinclair, take me home; take me home. I hardly know what has happened this night. But rest assured that my father and I will never be able to sufficiently repay you for your assistance."

The accidental speaking of his christian name by this fair young girl had sent a thrill of pleasure through the young man. It bade him hope that the warm feeling he had long hardly dared to indulge for the daughter of Professor Le Fevre was not perhaps so presumptuous, after all.

But this was no time for talking love.

The best way to prove it would be to help her out of this den, so unsuited to her delicate tastes and refined appearance.

"Mike, give me that rope in the corner. I must arrange Mr. Driver so that he will keep quiet for a few hours. We'll take Miss Le Fevre home first. Then we can come back and decide what to do next."

"Thrue for yez, Mr. Sunclair."

"It is evident that we have found the headquarters of the gang that young Frank Trenton was talking about."

"Sure!"

"And when we find him we can consult about Barney. The boy has something against him that we do not know of yet."

"All roight, Mr. Sunclair. Here's the rope. I'll tie that murthering villain meself. Begorra, he luks as if he w'u'd wake up in a minute."

Perhaps Mike Carroll never had a job that he enjoyed more than fastening his tyrant with the stout rope he had found in the corner. He knotted and twisted and pulled, and looped the rope around Barney Driver's limbs until the prostrate bully was utterly powerless even when he had recovered from the severe throttling administered by Lawrence Sinclair.

He finished the job by bestowing a hearty kick on Barney the Blacksheep.

"Take that, bad 'cess to yez, for what I owe yez."

Barney scowled malevolently.

"Phwat, ye'll luk crooked at me, will yez?" said Mike, with mock indignation. "Be the powers I'll give yez anither wan!"

Mike was as good as his word.

He rattled his heavy boot against Barney's back with such earnest good will that Lawrence felt constrained to interfere.

"Wait a minute, Mike. There is no reason to kick the man to death. There is enough against him, according to the boy, Trenton, to send him to the Penitentiary for ten years, but we have no right to kill him beforehand."

"I know; but he's sich a blaggard that I'd loike to settle with him meself."

"Well, don't do it. Just stay here and keep watch until I come back. I am going to take Miss Le Fevre home. Her father will be almost out of his mind."

"No, father does not even know I am out of the house, or I am sure he would have found me before this," sobbed Lucette.

"Indeed?" said Lawrence in astonishment.

He was about to ask the young girl for an explanation, but realizing that in her distress she was in no mood for talking, he said nothing about it.

"Here, Mike," he said, picking up the revolver that had been knocked from the hand of Barney the Blacksheep. "Take this pistol, and, if necessary to defend your life, use it, but not otherwise."

"All right, Mr. Sunclair. I don't take much shtock in goons, but I'll blow the top off the head av that naygur av he comes foolin' around here again, so I will."

"Don't forget that they hang people for committing murder, Mike, that's all," said Lawrence warningly, as he took down the bar of the door.

"Faith, then, they ought to hang Barney Droiver, for he's nearly kilt me lots av toimes," grumbled Mike.

"Drop that gun!" suddenly commanded a voice over Mike's head, and the Irishman let his pistol fall to the ground mechanically.

Lawrence Sinclair turned around quickly, but only to confront the muzzle of a revolver within a yard of his face held by the colored man, Oscar, who had leaped down to the table from the hole in the wall while Curly Bob, who had also dropped to the floor, covered Mike Carroll with a murderous-looking six-shooter.

CHAPTER VI.

DEADHOLD'S LUCKY SHOT.

When Barney the Blacksheep dashed through the window of the Demon Doctor's parlor, the three occupants of the room—the Doctor, Lucette and Frank Trenton—all moved involuntarily forward.

Then Frank Trenton said, quietly:

"Never mind, professor. Let him go. We can easily catch him when we want him."

"You seem to know his haunts," said the Demon Doctor.

"I do."

"Are you known as Deadhold, or was that only a fancy name invented by him?"

The boy laughed.

"The New York thieves who know me pretty well have given me that sobriquet. I think I can say, without egotism, that they have reason to know whether I deserve it or not. They have a tradition that when I once get a clue on a man he has to go where I want him."

"And yet you are not very——"

"Strong?"

"Yes, that is what I was going to remark," said the Demon Doctor, rather hesitatingly.

"Exactly. I am *not* very strong—physically. But we don't catch thieves by main strength nowadays."

"I beg your pardon. My remark was foolish, and I, who have always contended that the intellect is the only true standard of human greatness, should have known better than to utter it," said the Demon Doctor.

"Barney Driver has made a bad mistake for himself in making that $12,000 proposition," said Frank Trenton, changing the subject.

"Why?"

"Because he has revealed something to me that I never knew before, though I suspected it."

"What is it?"

"Only that he did a job in New York that I have been trying to trace for over a year."

"What sort of a job?"

"Burglary. That is Barney Driver's regular branch of the profession. He says he has a certain paper. I believe he has. The paper was stolen with others from a certain house in New York City."

"Ah!"

"As well as a large sum of money."

"Yes."

"So of course putting the two things together, and considering Mr. Driver's character, if he has that paper he must have stolen it."

"Of course—of course," said the Demon Doctor, excitedly. "It's as plain as daylight."

"It is—quite."

"Well, why in the name of all that's unexplainable, did you not let me stop him just now? I could have done it, with a simple pressure of my foot on the carpet. I have protected my house thoroughly with electric burglar traps and if the appliances had not all been out of order that night the jewels were stolen, the thieves would have had one of the greatest surprises of their lives, instead of getting away successfully with the diamonds."

"I didn't stop him because I didn't want him to slip away from us when once we have him. I want to catch him—red-handed; or, in other words, I mean to take him in the secret cave where I am convinced that he has hidden his plunder."

"You talk as if you were sure of catching him. How do you know that he won't slip away now altogether? He would be foolish to go to a place where he has reason to suppose you can coolly follow him."

"Thieves, as a rule, *are* foolish, or rather they think that they are smarter than their pursuers. If it were not for that peculiar trait, we should have more trouble in hunting them down than we do."

"What is your plan?"

"Well, Doctor, my plan is——"

"One minute," interrupted the Demon Doctor. "Lucette, my dear, you had better go to bed. Mr. Trenton and I may have to talk for some time, and it is already past your regular hour for retiring."

The girl obediently walked to the door, after kissing her father and bowing to Frank Trenton, and disappeared.

She stood in the hall that ran through the house from front to back, and then, actuated by a sudden impulse, stepped to the door that opened on the space outside the window to which we have already referred, and allowed the cool breeze to sweep across her forehead.

Hardly had she time to note the intense blackness of the night, relieved only by the glare that broke from the shattered window of her father's room, when a hand was placed over her mouth and a hoarse voice whispered:

"Silence, for your life!"

Lucette struggled wildly and would have shrieked for help but the cold muzzle of a pistol was placed against her cheek, and she suffered herself to be dragged unresistingly away.

As her captor pulled her across the yard, the light from the window fell full upon his features, and she saw that he was, as she had suspected, none other than Barney the Blacksheep.

"What do you want with me?" she asked, in a low tone, for the threatening pistol was pointed directly at her head.

"Never mind," said Barney Driver, savagely. "I want you, and that's enough."

"But this is monstrous, to be taken prisoner on my father's very doorstep. I will *not* go!"

Lucette made a desperate effort to free herself, as she saw her father standing just inside the broken window looking earnestly down at Frank Trenton, who was talking rapidly.

"You won't go?" said Barney, with brutal irony. "We'll see!"

"Fath——"

Ere the syllable was formed the coarse hand of Barney the Blacksheep was over her mouth again, as he muttered:

"Keep quiet, will you? or, by Heavens, I'll *kill* you!"

"Kill me, then," returned Lucette, inarticulately, as her captor's palm was pressed tighter over her lips.

Barney held the pistol close to her forehead, and for a second or two seemed disposed to carry his threat into execution.

At this moment Frank Trenton, in the room, arose and walked to the window.

"Deadhold! Curse him!" muttered Barney Driver, under his breath.

The boy stood at the side of the Demon Doctor, and the two were in full view of Barney and Lucette, while the two last named, having moved out of the shaft of light, were hidden entirely from the occupants of the room.

"Now, see here!" hissed Barney Driver in Lucette's ear. "I'm going to make you come along with me, and you may as well come quietly. If you don't make any fuss, I give you my word that I won't hurt you."

"Your word!" exclaimed Lucette, contemptuously.

"Yes, my word! It is all you have to rely upon at present, so you may as well take it," retorted Barney, with a sarcastic grin.

"Coward!"

"Save words of that sort until you are out of my power, unless you want me to make you suffer for them."

"Wretch, I defy you! Fath——"

Again Barney Driver's heavy hand stopped the word by pressing so hard upon the young girl's lips as nearly to cut them through with her teeth.

A sudden thought seemed to strike Barney, and he scowled ominously as he nodded his head with satisfaction over the idea.

"Listen to me," he growled.

"I must listen. You have me in your power."

"Yes, I have, and I mean to keep you there for a short time."

"A very brave performance for a man, to take a helpless girl prisoner!" said Lucette, scornfully.

Barney winced.

"Speak again," he said, "or refuse to come quietly with me, and I swear I'll shoot—not you, but, your father."

Lucette recoiled in horror.

"Ha! You don't like that? I thought you wouldn't. But I'll do it, as sure as my name is Barney Driver, if I have any more trouble with you."

"You dare not!"

"Daren't I? You don't know me!"

These last words were gritted out between his clinched teeth, and Lucette saw deadly resolution in his eyes.

"I'll—I'll go!" she gasped.

"Of course you will," chuckled Barney. "I knew you would."

Lucette cast a last despairing glance at her father, standing in the lighted room, behind the broken sash, and though one shriek would have caused him to light up the whole yard by a simple touch of an electric button, and probably accomplish her rescue, she durst not utter a sound.

Too well she knew that the maddened wretch dragging her away would send a bullet crashing through his brain at the first outcry from her lips, and she therefore suffered herself to be borne into the dark entry to the deserted mine, without another word of protest, rather than expose her beloved father to a deadly risk.

The next instant she was being led rapidly through the winding passages of the mine, feeling at every step as if she were leaving all hope further and further behind.

How she was brought to the secret rendezvous of Barney Driver's gang, and what befell her there, we already know.

"So you think the best way will be for you and I to go through the mine to-night, eh? You can find the place, you say?" the Demon Doctor was saying, at the very minute that Barney Driver was telling Lucette he would shoot her father if she did not obey his orders.

"Yes; that is my idea."

"But are you armed?"

For answer Frank Trenton drew forth from a leather pocket-book his credentials as a detective in connection with the New York Police Department, together with an official recognition from the Pittsburg Chief of Police.

"I never carry deadly weapons," he remarked, quietly.

"And yet you have made many important captures?"

"Yes."

"Of determined, unscrupulous criminals?"

"Yes."

"Of men who would not hesitate to cut your throat, or shoot you through the head if it would enable them to escape?"

"Yes."

"Frank Trenton, you are a mystery," said the Demon Doctor, drawing a long breath.

"So they tell me in New York."

"Well, I will take weapons with me, and I think you had better put this six-shooter in your pocket, in case of accidents."

The boy objected strenuously to thus departing from his rule, but finally, to satisfy his friend, the Demon Doctor, took the revolver and placed it in his coat-pocket, ready to his hand.

"Where is your own pistol?" asked the boy.

"I am well armed, never fear," was the reply. "Let us start!"

The Demon Doctor placed a heavy shutter against the inside of his broken window. Then he went to a small cabinet in a corner, unlocked it, and moved certain shining brass knobs within.

Frank Trenton was following the movements of his companion curiously.

"I am setting my watch-dog," explained the Demon Doctor. "He is always vigilant, and cannot be poisoned or shot. Some people call these devices electric burglar-traps. I prefer simply to think of them as something intelligent, so I call them my watch-dog."

"What's his name?"

"Old Electricity, of course."

The Demon Doctor smiled grimly at the conceit, and Frank Trenton gave utterance to a careless, boyish laugh, more in keeping with his youthful appearance than with the weighty business that he was in the habit of transacting in his daily life.

The two soon stood in the yard outside the house, where the tremendous stature of the Demon Doctor towered high in the gloom above the slight figure of the boy, making the latter look by comparison well worthy of his nickname, "The Kid Detective."

But small and weak as the boy appeared to be, he took the lead in the expedition, the Demon Doctor following his guidance unquestioningly.

"You have never been very far into the mine this way have you?" asked Frank.

"To the end of it," was the reply. "It only runs back a hundred yards or so."

Frank Trenton smiled.

"I see you don't know as much about it as I do," he said, "though I haven't lived here for years as you have. See?"

The two had walked a short distance into the black hole, which, however, was brilliantly lighted by an electric lamp carried by the Demon Doctor on his bosom—the same light, by the way, that had so terrified Barney Driver the night before.

"Now, I'll show you something," continued the boy, as, kicking aside some slate and dust in a corner, he exposed a small trap-door, with a sunken iron ring.

The trap was easily lifted, and the boy rapidly descended by means of a rude ladder, closely followed by the Demon Doctor.

Hardly had they time to see that they stood in a long passage, some eight feet in height, when a burly negro suddenly sprung from behind a wooden support and made a lunge at Frank Trenton with a murderous looking knife.

Quick as a flash the boy drew his revolver and fired, the bullet striking the knife and sending it spinning from his assailant's hand.

"Doctor, I am glad I carried a pistol for once in my life," said the boy, coolly, as the negro slipped around a corner and disappeared among the tortuous windings of the mine.

CHAPTER VII.

IN AN AWKWARD PREDICAMENT.

"Well, be jabers, we are caught loike rats in a thrap, sure," was Mike Carroll's exclamation, as he put his hands in his pockets and looked in comical dismay from one to the other.

"Take this rope off me!" growled Barney Driver to Oscar.

"All right, boss. But who's gwine to watch my man while I'm doing it?" responded Oscar, nodding toward Lawrence Sinclair, who was evidently ready to take advantage of the first unwary movement on the part of his enemies.

"Haven't you got a knife, and can't you cut this rope without taking your eyes off him?" asked Barney, impatiently.

"Thrue for yez," broke in Mike Carroll. "Cut his ropes! Bedad! he must be as stuff as a dead goose. I'll lend yez a knoif, if yez haven't wan. Just take that gun away from the head av me, young man, an' I'll take his ropes aff av him in a brace of shakes."

"Shut your mouth!" commanded Barney.

"There's ingratitood for yez," responded the irrepressible Irishman. "Sure, I—"

The colored man gave Mike a push that threw him over upon the heap of slate and rubbish, where he contentedly remained, with Curly Bob standing over him, pistol in hand.

Two or three rapid movements of the negro's knife, and Barney and Blacksheep was on his feet, with his bonds lying by his side.

His first act was to step over to Mike Carroll and bestow upon him a hearty kick.

"Ow! Ow! Phwat did yez do that for, Barney? Sure you're always shpitting yer shpaite on the bones av me, widout any r'ason," grumbled Mike.

Barney did not condescend to answer.

He pushed the table from the center of the room, and, removing a piece of dilapidated rag-carpet, revealed a square, wooden trap-door, with a sunken ring, almost a counterpart of that found by the Demon Doctor and Frank Trenton in another part of the mine.

Barney was about to raise the trap, but paused as he glanced upward at the hole in the wall which had afforded ingress to most of the occupants of the room, and to which repeated reference has been made.

"Why don't that door shut?" he asked, angrily, of Oscar.

"Faith, I'll shet it for yez," interrupted Mike. "Anything to be agreeable."

Barney Driver gave the Irishman a savage look, but did not say anything, while Oscar, handing his revolver to Barney, climbed up to the opening, and with a dexterous movement closed the door, which fastened with a spring.

"Begorra, you've shut aff all the vintilation," observed Mike, "an' the gas gives out h'ate enough to froye eggs."

"I'll fry your head over it if you don't keep quiet," said Barney Driver savagely, as he pulled up the trap and disclosed a dark hole, up which a current of cool air rushed with force enough to dispel all Mike Carroll's apprehensions concerning lack of ventilation.

"Get down here!" commanded Barney, looking at Lawrence Sinclair, who had stood perfectly still, since the tables had been turned on him, waiting for an opportunity to catch Barney the Blacksheep and his men off their guard.

"What is that place?" he asked, as he tried to peer into the blackness of the pit.

"Never mind. Get in."

"Does that mean murder?"

"Perhaps."

Lawrence Sinclair made a movement as if he would fly at Barney's throat, but the threatening pistol in the hand of Oscar, the negro, held him in check, though the sarcastic grin on the face of Driver goaded him almost to madness.

"Now, see here," he said, as he choked down his resentment with a mighty effort; "what is your object in making me a prisoner? for I suppose that is what you intend."

"What is my object," repeated Barney Driver, with a sneer. "That's pretty good from you. What are you doing here at all? What have you been chasing me through the mines for to-night, and by what right are you in this—this—cellar," hesitating for a suitable word, "for which I pay rent, and which I use only for lawful purposes—to work out an invention that I am anxious to keep from the world until it is properly protected in the Patent Office?"

"Is that what you use this place for?" asked Lawrence, innocently.

"Certainly it is. What else should I be doing here in the middle of the night?"

"Sorra a man o' we knows," put in Mike Carroll. "Stoodyin' Ashstronomy, loikely."

Curly Bob looked threateningly at the Irishman who was not in the least disturbed by it, however.

"You say you are here for a lawful purpose," continued Lawrence Sinclair to Barney the Driver.

"Yes."

"Then what are you doing here with the young lady?" pointing to Lucette, who with an expression of deadly fright on her face, was sitting behind Lawrence, listening intently to the conversation.

Barney Driver stammered as he tried to invent a lie that should suit his purpose. Then he said, boldly:

"The young lady lost her way in the mine, and I brought her here for safety until I can take her back to her father. He and she were examining some peculiar marks in a passage of it near their house, which the Doctor thought was gold. She became separated from him accidentally, I happened to meet her on my way here and brought her with me. She is so excited and frightened that she does not trust me, I am afraid, but I am telling you the truth."

"And now you are holding me a prisoner to further your own wicked ends," broke in the girl, passionately, "Oh, Lawrence, save me!"

She threw herself into the arms of the young man, who pressed her to his bosom passionately.

He felt that he would die for the helpless girl, whose fear of Barney the Blacksheep had impelled her to reveal a secret—the secret that she loved the young man—which could never have been dragged through the wall of her maidenly reserve by any less exigent circumstances.

"Quit that," said Barney, peremptorily, as he stepped forward, and seized Lucette by the arm.

With the strength and fury of a lion Lawrence Sinclair hurled Barney across the room.

He could not bear that the Blacksheep's sacrilegious touch should rest even for a second on the innocent young girl who had unwittingly confessed that she looked to her lover more than to any one else in the world for her future happiness.

The attack took Barney Driver completely by surprise.

He reeled against Oscar, who in turn fell over Mike Carroll.

"Bad 'cess to yez, Lawrence. What are ye doomping all your roobish over me for," said Mike as, with a quick movement he tried to wrench the negro's revolver from his hand.

Oscar resisted, and in doing so knocked Barney Driver backward, so that he slipped partly down the hole from which he had removed the trap-door, one of his legs being suspended in the opening, while the other was doubled under him on the floor of the room.

With a bound, Lawrence Sinclair was kneeling on the chest of the prostrate Barney.

"Mike," he cried, "help me, and I'll push him down here. Quick!"

"Begorra, how kin I, with this murtherin' naygur standing over me carcass with a goon. I'd break the jaw off uv him, if it warn't for that!"

Curly Bob, who had at first been too much astonished to do anything but stare, now recovered himself and darted to Barney Driver's assistance.

Seizing Lawrence by the collar, he pulled him back and threw him flat on the floor.

Before he could recover himself, Curly Bob had helped Barney to his feet, and Lawrence Sinclair was on his back, with Barney's knee on his chest and Barney's clutch on his throat.

For one moment the ruffian seemed determined to kill Sinclair by choking him to death. Then he changed his mind.

He arose, and beckoning to Curly Bob, the two suddenly rolled the young man over and over, and threw him head-first down the trap into the darkness below.

To Lawrence's surprise he was not much hurt by the fall.

So much of the soft shale and dust had accumulated under the hole, that though he dropped on the top of his head he felt hardly any shock, and beyond a slight twisting of the neck, did not suffer any inconvenience from what might have been, under other circumstances, a fatal plunge.

He quickly gained his feet, and looking upward, at the square patch of light outlined by the trap, saw that he had fallen about seven feet.

There was no possible way of reaching the opening from where he stood, and he tried to pierce the gloom on every side for some avenue of escape.

"Och! Be gob, now, ye're no gintlemon, let me tell yez, Muster Barney, to have a naygur bustlin' me around widout sayin' as much as by your l'ave," said Mike Carroll's voice, in comical indignation, as the opening was darkened by the form of the little Irishman, who, with a foot planted firmly on each side of the hole, resisted the efforts of Oscar to throw him down to join Lawrence Sinclair.

"Quit fooling with him, Oscar," said Barney Driver, surlily. "Pitch him in headlong if he won't jump down."

"Foolin', d'ye be callin', it, eh? Be gob! I'd have yez to know that I don't allow no naygurs to fool wid me, so I don't."

"Get down, with you!" said Barney, savagely, at the same time kicking Mike's right foot from beneath him.

"Faith an' I will," said the Irishman, as he involuntarily obeyed the command by tumbling in a heap by the side of Lawrence on the pile of rubbish.

"Well, I guess you're down now," said Barney.

"Indade an' I am. Good avenin', Barney. Tell the b'yes at the Star Mill that I'll have to lay off the day. I'm goin' to a picnic wid me friend, Mr. Sunclair, and be the same token—"

Crash fell the trap-door, and Mike Carroll and Lawrence Sinclair found themselves in an Egyptian-like darkness.

"This is a pretty fix we're in," said Lawrence, as he clinched his fists in impotent rage, "and to think of Lu—Miss Le Fevre—being in the power of that villain. Oh! I shall go out of my mind, I believe," he added, in agony.

"A murtherin' vill'in, so he is," said Mike, "but I don't belave as he'll harrum the young leddy. It's a koind of a blackmailin' schame, Mr. Sunclair—that's phwat it is, an' be jabers, we'll eucher him at that, an' don't yez forgit it."

The good-natured little Irishman felt in the darkness until he found his companion's hand. Then he shook it with such a hearty clasp that Lawrence Sinclair felt comforted by it, in spite of himself.

"Mike, you are a good fellow."

"Thank ye, Muster Sunclair, for the good charackter yez be givin' me, but I'm too fond of a thaste of the whisky to be very good, an' it's meself as knows it."

"Listen," said Lawrence. "What are they doing up there?"

"Sorra a wan uv me knows. What d'ye think they be at?"

"I thought I heard them taking that bar down from the door. It makes a peculiar noise when it is moved. I noticed that when I was up there," returned Lawrence.

"That shows what a moighty foine thing eddication is. Sure you noticed all them things because you have book-larnin', an', be gob, I belave you're right."

Mike Carroll listened intently. Then he burst forth:

"Yis, sure enough. They're all goin' to git out. There, listen to that, will yez?" as the sound of a slamming door reached the prisoners in their dark prison.

"What do you make of that, Mike?"

"Phwat do I make of it?"

"Yes."

"Phwhy, just this. I belave they're goin' to take that young leddy away to some safe place, phwere they can keep her out of soight, d'ye moind, and where people ain't as lokely to find her, as they would be in the moins, and that they'll leave us to foind our way out the best way we can. There's my vardict, gintlemen of the jury. An' yez can make the most uv it."

Mike evidently considered that he had distinguished himself by a flow of oratory, and he waited for Lawrence to speak before he said anything more.

The young man remained silent for at least half a minute. Then he quietly asked Mike if he had a match in his pocket.

"Dunno. I'll go through the clothes uv me an' tell yez."

Mike fumbled in his pockets, talking in his characteristic way all the time.

Another loud crash was heard in the room above, and then

there was the scuffling of feet, as of somebody moving about on the trap-door.

"Howly Moses, phat's goin' on? That must be some wan else coomin'."

"Hush!" said Lawrence, listening intently. "I can hear the voices of two people. One is deep and the other is soft. It's—By heavens! The Demon Doctor, and the boy, Frank Trenton!"

"You're roight!" said Mike, excitedly, as he, too, tried to catch the words of the unseen persons above them. "Hallo! Hallo! Whoop!" he yelled at the top of his voice.

The people in the room ceased speaking. They had heard the cries, but could not determine from whence they came.

"Where are you?" sounded Frank Trenton's voice in the distance.

"Here! Here!" returned Lawrence Sinclair.

"Father! Father! Help!"

It was Lucette's voice, and it came apparently from some portion of the mine on the same level as Sinclair and the Irishman.

Lawrence Sinclair started and fell against Mike in his excitement.

"Phwat ar' yez goin' to do?"

"I don't know. But I must get out of this place somehow. Haven't you got a match?"

"Sorra a wan."

"Father! Father!"

"It *is* her voice! Where can she be?" cried Lawrence, excitedly. "And I as helpless as a baby!"

"Father! Father!" for the third time.

"My child!" said the Demon Doctor.

Again the sound of the bar and bolts, a few hasty steps, and all was silent above the young man and his companion.

"Heaven help them to find her!" said Lawrence Sinclair, fervently, "even if we never get out of this fearful hole alive."

"But, be gob! we wull git out alive, Mr. Sinclair," said Mike. "So yez can make up your moind to that, avourneen!"

CHAPTER VIII.

A TERRIBLE CHARGE.

The morning after the eventful night, that had witnessed the abduction of Lucette and the imprisonment of Lawrence Sinclair, broke light, sunny and mild.

Though the month of December was nearly a week old, there had not yet been any severe weather, and people were still wearing light clothing and standing on street corners, as is the custom of Pittsburgers whenever the temperature permits.

The three beautiful rivers that environ the city, were rippling like silver and gold in the sunlight, while in the trees that fringe the Ohio just below the gloomy mills and warehouses, a few birds that had overstaid their time from the South, were twittering their surprise at the lingering of autumn into the last month of the year.

Lucette Le Fevre heard the birds when she awoke from a fevered sleep and tried to think where she was.

The light streamed in through a small window barred with iron, and curtained with a square of muslin close to her head, while the rippling of water just outside, indicated that she was near the river.

She was lying on a small cot-bed on a sort of shelf against the wooden wall, and one comprehensive glance around her convinced the girl that she was in a boat, in a small cabin.

Besides the cot, or bunk, in which she lay, the only furniture was a small table against the opposite wall, a dilapidated chair, and a low wooden stool. A few theatrical lithographs were tacked on the walls, and were the only attempts at decoration to be seen.

The boat was quite still, unless, indeed, it was moving very, very smoothly.

For a few moments the girl struggled hard to remember how she had been brought to this place, that, though basking in the broad sunshine, was too evidently as much her prison as the gloomy underground chamber in the heart of Mount Washington.

It was useless to try and think.

Her recollection carried her back only to the moment when she was led through the doorway from the secret room of the mine, with Barney Driver's powerful hand on her arm, and the colored man and Curly Bob, each carrying a small bull's-eye lantern, following.

She had a hazy idea that she cried for her father to assist her, and she almost fancied that she had heard his voice answering. This she dismissed, however, as nothing more than a hallucination induced by the excitement through which she had passed.

Lucette stepped to the window, drew aside the curtain and looked out.

The river lay before her, with steamers and barges passing and repassing, while across on the other bank the city of Allegheny stretched in regular blocks of buildings and terraced hills.

The craft in which she was confined was a shanty-boat—one of those half-cabin, half-ferry boats that are stretched along the shores of the south side from one end of the city to the other.

The lawless character of most of their occupants are well-known, and an occasional raid upon them by the police, resulting in the arrest of several and the rebuking of others, is the only thing that makes their existence tolerated at all.

Lucette had heard enough of these shanty-boats to know that it was possible to use them as prisons from which there was little hope of escape.

There was a small, narrow door, at one end of the diminutive cabin, sloping, as doors so often do on a ship or boat, to accommodate itself to the "run" of the craft.

The girl turned the wooden knob and tried to open the door.

To her surprise, it yielded, and she passed through the doorway into another room, larger than that in which she had slept, and which was in darkness save for the light that streamed through the doorway from her own room.

"Well, what do you want?" asked the gruff voice of Barney Driver.

Lucette started and moved a step toward the cabin she had just left.

Then she looked back and saw a man lying on a rude bench, whom even in the semi-darkness she recognized as Barney Driver.

"Now, don't commence to ask me why I am keeping you here, and what I intend to do with you, because you won't get any answer that will satisfy you, and it will only make me mad," said Barney the Blacksheep, as he sat up on his bench and glared at Lucette.

"Don't talk to her like that, Barney, dear. You frighten the child," said a timid voice, and Lucette involuntarily looked toward the corner from which it proceeded.

Her eyes had become somewhat accustomed to the gloom, and she managed to discern a moving something that might have been a big dog, for anything she could tell.

"Shut up!" was Barney's reply to the timid voice. "When I want *your* advice I will ask for it. Open the shutter and get some breakfast. I've got work to do to-night."

The something in the corner came forth, and Lucette saw that it was a woman in a ragged calico dress.

The woman opened a wooden shutter at a window over Barney Driver's head, and let in a flood of light.

As she paused for an instant in front of the window, with the sun full in her face, the woman stood revealed as a pale, delicate girl, not much older than Lucette herself.

"Now, then, hurry up there," growled Barney, and get breakfast, or I'll find a way to make you."

The girl heaved a sigh that went straight to Lucette's sympathetic heart.

Sadly she went about her work, kindling a fire in a queer little stove, with scraps of wood that had evidently drifted down the river, and preparing coffee for the meal for her lord.

For this poor young girl, with the pale, wan face and the ragged calico dress, was the devoted wife of Barney the Blacksheep.

The man eyed her sulkily but keenly, as she moved about the little cabin, and once, when she went close to Lucette, as if to speak to her, he hurled one of his heavy hob-nailed shoes, that he wore in the mill, full in her face.

She put up her hand quickly and caught it on her wrist, a great red lump, that would soon turn black, rising angrily on her slender arm.

Lucette's eyes flashed fire as she saw the brutal act, but the young wife, with a gesture that indicated that she was used to such performances, only said, quietly:

"There was no need for that, Barney. I was not going to do any harm."

"I don't know about that," was the reply. "I don't trust you very much. Just keep away from that girl for the present. I shall want you to talk to her presently, perhaps, but not now."

Lucette had gone into her own cabin and shut the door. She felt as if she could not bear the loathsome presence of the uncouth fellow who had so strangely become her jailer.

She sat down on the broken chair and tried to look her situation in the face.

She understood thoroughly what purpose Barney Driver had in making her prisoner. The secret he had, or pretended to have, he was determined to sell to her father, and he intended to consummate the bargain by making her liberty part of the consideration for the money he hoped to extort from him.

That he should never accomplish his purpose she was determined. She would escape from his clutches somehow, and he should pay the penalty of his misdeeds according to the provisions of the law.

"Come in and have some breakfast," said Barney Driver's gruff voice outside the door.

She knew that she would need all her strength, and therefore accepted the invitation, distasteful as it was. Bread and butter, eggs and coffee constituted the meal.

Barney Driver ate his portion in silence, but keeping a wary eye on his wife and Lucette all the while, and scowling savagely at the former occasionally, apparently from simple force of habit.

As soon as she had satisfied her hunger, Lucette returned to her room.

She stood at the barred window, revolving plans of escape, but without arriving at any definite conclusion.

Even if it were possible to get through the window she would only drop into the river. She did not know how deep it might be, though she knew the shanty-boat was, like all its neighbors, moored close to the wharf.

She took out her watch, which she had fortunately wound up the night before, and to her surprise saw that it was twelve o'clock.

All the morning had passed while she had been asleep.

She sat still for some time, paying no attention to the movements of the two persons in the next room, when she was startled by a soft knock at the door, and the voice of Barney Driver's young wife, asking if she might come in.

Lucette, for answer, threw open the door.

"I hope you won't blame me," said the poor creature. "I can't help it. Barney does not consult me about his business. He brought you here last night, and told me I was to take care of you, and not to let you get out, but to make you as comfortable as I could."

"The wretch!" said Lucette, indignantly. Then, when she saw the look of pain on the face of her companion, she was sorry that she had permitted her feelings to gain the better of her.

He was this poor woman's husband, after all.

"Has he gone out?" asked Lucette.

"Yes. He says he has business to attend to, and he will not be home till late. I don't know what business he can have, when he is not at work at the mill, and he has not been there to-day."

"What is your name?" asked Lucette, suddenly.

"Clara."

"A pretty name! Clara, will you help me?"

"In what way? Don't ask me to let you go. Barney would kill me."

"That's what I was going to ask you. But, never mind. I won't say any more about it. But—could you not deliver a message for me?"

The woman hesitated.

"It would not take you very long," suggested Lucette. "It is only to go to my father and tell him that I am safe. He lives on Mount Washington."

"And have him bring the police down on Barney? Oh, no. I know Barney is not good to me, but I couldn't get him into trouble, so don't ask me. I have taken a fancy to you, and I'll do my best to keep you from harm; but I can't do anything to hurt Barney."

"Very well, Clara," said Lucette, resignedly. "I suppose, if I am a prisoner, I can have the privilege of being by myself?"

Clara looked hurt at this very strong hint, but retired without a word, shutting the door behind her.

Lucette felt sorry for the girl, but did not regret the fact that she had gone away.

Some means of escape must be devised promptly, and Lucette realized that she could not expect any assistance from the wife of Barney Driver, badly as he evidently treated her.

She shook the bars of the window, but they were immovable. She could never get out that way.

She thought of the door; but it led only into the outer room, where Barney's wife, Clara, was making the place as tidy as she could.

Suddenly a thought struck her from which her gentle nature recoiled instinctively.

"No, I could not do that," she murmured. "And yet, perhaps it is my only chance."

She walked up and down, thinking—thinking.

Then she tossed her head with an air of resolve. She had the means of escape in her pocket, and the time had arrived when she must use it.

She had always taken a deep interest in the studies of her father, and had learned from him the uses and effects of many potent drugs, as well as many of the possibilities of electricity.

She drew from her pocket a small bottle, filled with a colorless liquid.

"Yes, here it is. A strange chance that I should have slipped it in my pocket yesterday. I will use it, and I hope it will enable me to get out of this terrible predicament."

"Clara," she called.

"Yes," said the young wife, as she opened the door and came in.

"Will you give me a glass of water?"

"Certainly," said Clara, apparently pleased to be asked for anything.

In another minute she had filled a glass from a pail of water and handed it to Lucette.

The latter sipped it, and then, unseen by Clara, poured the contents of the little bottle into the glass.

"Clara, do you think this water is good?" she said, holding out the glass.

"Yes, I think so."

"Taste it."

"Certainly."

Clara took a draught of the water, and Lucette, who had anticipated the effect, caught the girl in her arms as she staggered forward unconscious.

"It seems terrible," murmured Lucette, "but it was my only course. Poor girl! She will awake in about an hour as well as ever I know, but still I feel almost like a murderess."

She laid Clara on the cot-bed and then hastily sought a means of exit.

Ah, here was the door, but of stout wood and carefully bolted and locked.

The bolts she easily slid back, but the large lock still opposed her.

Where was the key?

She did not stop to ask herself the question more than once, but going into the other room, searched through the clothing of the inanimate Clara, who lay like a corpse on the small cot-bed.

She soon found the great brass key, and returned with it triumphantly to the outer door.

Delicate as she was, Lucette could be brave and determined when thrown upon her own resources.

The brass key turned with difficulty, but she managed to move it, and the next instant the door swung open and she stood on a small deck or platform outside the cabin.

A gang-plank stretched from the deck to a coal barge, and from thence another plank led to the muddy shore.

Lucette put her foot on the first plank with an elated feeling, as she thought how soon she would be home, perhaps, without her father being even aware of her absence, when she felt the plank shake, and looking up saw that a man with a big beard and an air of good-natured determination was coming toward her.

"Stay there," he commanded. "I want to go through that boat of yours."

"Mine—it is not mine," said Lucette, hardly knowing what she was saying.

"That's all right," said the man, with a knowing smile. "Of course it isn't yours. I know you shanty-boat people. You can't fool me. Let me get past you. There is some property somewhere that I want to find, and I am going through this place of yours first thing."

He pushed past Lucette into the inner room.

Almost before the girl realized her situation the man came out again, fastened a pair of handcuffs on her wrists, and exclaimed:

"I am a detective, and I arrest you on a charge of murder!"

"Murder?" shrieked Lucette, and she fell at his feet, insensible.

CHAPTER IX.

THE CASHIER'S UNLOOKED-FOR FRIEND.

When Barney Driver left his shanty-boat home, after eating his breakfast and giving his wife strict orders to guard the prisoner vigilantly until his return, he crossed the river by way of the two bridges that span the head-waters of the Ohio.

As he crossed he continually looked back suspiciously at the boat, as if to watch that his orders were not disobeyed by the feeble young girl who, a short year ago, had joined her fate to

his, and never resented the brutal treatment that was her portion every day.

He walked through several streets in Allegheny City until he reached the tracks of the Fort Wayne Railroad.

He had changed his dress somewhat, and now wore a fur cap, with a peak; a short sack coat, with capacious pockets inside and out; while on his feet were light, well-made shoes, in which he would be able to run easily, if necessary.

He walked slowly along the track, but as one with a purpose in view. He did not hurry, because the place he was going to was near enough for him to reach before dark, had he desired it.

But he did not desire it. Night was the time during which he must accomplish the business of which he had spoken vaguely to his wife, and he could walk leisurely along, as he was doing, and still have several hours to spare when he reached his destination.

He glanced carelessly at the Ohio running merrily along by his side, and noted that the waters of La Belle Riviere were pretty high.

Occasionally his gaze wandered to the verdure-crowned rocks on the other side of the track, and he wondered which way he would run if he found himself suddenly beset by the police—his natural enemies for years past.

More often, however, he did not think of anything save the job he had in hand, and the scheme he was trying to bring to a successful issue with the Demon Doctor.

"Let me get through this night's work safely and sell that secret to old Le Fevre," he thought, "and I'll quit crooked business for good. I'm getting tired of being hunted down by the cops all the time, and I should like to lead a quiet life if I had enough money to keep the pot boiling. I shall have enough, too, if my plans work all right this time."

Barney Driver was like most wrongdoers, always making up his mind to reform after he had committed one more sin.

He walked slowly down the track of the Fort Wayne road until, when it was quite dark, the roar of the water at Davis Island Dam fell upon his ear.

"Here we are," he muttered, "several hours ahead of time. I wonder if those fellows are there yet."

He plodded on until at last he stood on the edge of the lock—the largest in the world—at Davis Island Dam.

The water was rushing over the wickets, looking in the moonlight like dancing silver. Everything else about the place was as silent as the grave.

"The moon will be down in about two hours. Oscar and Curly wouldn't be likely to show themselves in this light. I'll wait."

He walked back, crossed the railroad track, and ascended the winding road, overshadowed by immense hemlocks and oaks, that lead to the small, but aristocratic borough of Bellevue, on the heights.

"I may as well look around," he thought, "and see that everything is all right. Besides, there is the dog to be fixed."

The road, which on one side was bounded by a sloping bank, thickly overgrown with blackberry bushes and prickly shrubbery, while the other was a deep chasm, with a railing to protect the wooden sidewalk, led up to a small bridge across the gorge, that gave access to the grounds of the stately mansion.

"Ah! there's the place," said Barney. "And a mighty nice place it is. It is almost a pleasure to be going to work a high-toned house like this. It is too good for the cashier of a bank, seems to me. But I'll relieve him of a little of the bank's hard-earned wealth to-night if I have luck, and perhaps he won't feel quite so big after it."

He crossed the wooden bridge and walked through the park that surrounded the little eminence upon which stood the house.

He reached a small glade surrounded by large-spreading maple trees, and paused for breath.

A large white bulldog came bounding through the trees, with its white teeth glistening dangerously in the moonlight.

Without uttering a sound, it sprung savagely at Barney Driver.

A quick movement enabled Barney to avoid the attack, and then—a strange thing happened. The man waved his hand two or three times as the dog crouched in readiness to spring again, and the animal remained stiffened in the attitude he had assumed, entirely ceasing belligerent demonstrations.

"Poor fellow!" said Barney, soothingly. "Poor fellow! You don't want to jump on me, after all, do you?"

The dog wagged his tail feebly, while his eyes followed Barney Driver's every movement.

The latter chuckled softly, as he took a paper bag from his hip pocket and opened it.

"You bet. I haven't owned a hundred dogs in my life without knowing how to cool them off," he muttered. "That little wave of the hand, with something in it that dogs can never resist, has saved me from a mangling more than once."

He took from the paper a piece of meat and gave it to the dog, who devoured it greedily.

"Good, old fellow, eh?" said Barney, as he coolly turned away and walked toward the house.

He knew that there was enough poison in the meat to kill the animal within a few minutes, and he did not care to stay and watch his dying agonies.

"I never could bear to see animals suffer, anyhow," he said to himself. "I'd rather see a man poisoned, any day; but I'm obliged to do this in the way of business.

"Yes, they look very comfortable in there," he said, ten minutes later, as he stood on the lawn looking through a window into the library of the man he intended to rob.

It was a large, handsomely-furnished room, with a book-case on one side of the room, and a bright fire throwing a cheerful glow over the rich upholstered chairs and sofas scattered carelessly around.

In a large easy-chair, in front of the fire, sat an elderly, gentlemanly-looking man, while at his feet two kittens gamboled on the hearth-rug.

Barney Driver noted all this at the first glance.

But something else engaged his attention more particularly—something that was the goal of the expedition in which he was about to risk his life perhaps.

It was an iron vault, built into the wall, and secured with a time-lock as well as by an ordinary safe letter-lock.

The blind at the window had been pulled down, but there was a gap at the side through which Barney had a full view of the room and its contents.

The moon had gone down, and it was quite dark on the lawn outside the house.

Even if there should be any one else in the grounds they would not be likely to see Barney Driver, as he stood close in the shadow of the building.

The gentleman inside sat at the table in his easy-chair, intent on his papers, which he was reading and from which he occasionally made entries in a large strongly bound account book.

He was evidently making up, in the privacy of his own home, for time lost in the day, or else was compelled to work after hours to keep even with his regular task.

He was one of the largest stockholders in the bank, being practically its owner, as well as cashier, and could therefore arrange his hours of work, to a large extent, to suit himself.

Utterly unconscious of the lurking desperado, outside the window, the gentleman leisurely turned over his papers and noted figures in the big book.

The room was a picture of quiet comfort.

"Now that vault has got to be fixed somehow before the old man goes to bed. If he sets that time-lock himself, it will be a deuce of a job to get it open, because he will put it for eight or nine o'clock in the morning, sure, and I want to get into it not later than one," muttered Barney. "If I had known there was a time-lock on it I would have had it attended to before."

He knitted his brows as he tried to decide in what way he should overcome this obstacle in the way of the robbery he contemplated.

"The old man probably opens that door at the same time every morning. These bank fellows always work on a system, like clocks. I know them."

Barney stopped to chuckle, as if he had treated himself to a rather neat joke.

"I know them like a book. I have had dealings with banks before."

He chuckled again. The joke was really very rich.

Then he resumed his observations of the interior of the room and tried to think out a plan for the accomplishment of his intentions.

"I must get at that time-lock, and quickly, too, or the old rooster will close the door and I shall have several hours' dangerous work to get it open."

The vault door was partly open, though from where he stood, Barney could not see inside.

The door of the room, leading as he knew, into the hall, was within two feet of the vault.

"If I could open that door a few inches, I believe I could slip through and into the vault without the old fellow seeing me," muttered Barney.

He saw that the cashier, as he sat in his easy-chair, intent upon his papers, had his back toward the vault.

If the room door could be opened silently, how easy it would be to slip into the vault and turn the hands of the time-lock so that the door would swing open at midnight instead of eight o'clock in the morning!

"I'll try it," said Barney, desperately, "and if the worst comes, why—"

He did not finish the sentence, but drew from a sheath hidden under his coat, a long, gleaming knife, and touched its sharp point significantly.

He replaced the knife, and taking from an inside pocket a pair of light rubber overshoes, quickly put them on over the shoes he wore.

"Now, I am ready; and, Mr. Bank Cashier, look out for me, because I am coming."

He tried the window softly.

"By Jupiter! The window is unfastened. That's funny. I could slide in this way if I didn't think the other was the safest."

He stole around the house, carefully making not a rustle among the light shrubbery that arose in clumps in a ghostly fashion here and there.

A flight of stone steps led up to the main door of the mansion, while a veranda extended along the whole front.

To run lightly up the steps and stand on the veranda was the work of a moment.

The room in which sat the owner was in the corner of the mansion, and had another window looking on the veranda. This window, however, was closely shuttered.

"If I'd been him, I'd have fastened the other window, too. But of course he knows his own business," chuckled Barney Driver, as he tried the front door and found it fastened with lock and bolts.

He looked carefully up and down the veranda and as far into the grounds as he could.

Nothing was could be seen save the tall trees standing sentinel-like here and there and the shrubbery and grass nestling at his feet around the house.

"It must be about eleven o'clock," he thought, "and I suppose Curly and Oscar are waiting for me with the boat. If I don't hurry this job will slip through, sure. I've got to fix the vault, then get back to tell Curly, and then come back here with him and work the vault for that money, unless the old fellow should have left it where I can pick it up easily."

He produced from one of his capacious pockets three or four skeleton keys on a small iron ring, and examined them, as he pursued his reflections:

"A hundred thousand dollars, eh? That, with my other stuff, will fix me for life. In that iron box in the small safe in the right-hand corner at the back of the vault. 'Um!"

He selected one of the skeleton keys and placed it in the lock. One wrench, and the lock was overcome.

"So far, so good. Now for the bolts."

He pocketed the skeleton keys and drew out a steel instrument, which he applied to the bolt through the crack of the door.

A dexterous movement and the big door was open.

He stepped swiftly inside, closed the door and dropped on his knees behind the hat-rack while he made up his mind as to his next proceeding.

"No fear of that money being left out. It will be in the iron box, in its regular place. But that won't trouble me much if I can get the time-lock in good shape," he said to himself. "Well, every thing seems quiet here. I guess it's safe to go ahead."

He crawled out from his hiding-place and turned out the oil lamp that threw a feeble glimmer over the hall.

Then he walked on tip-toe to the door of the room in which the cashier sat, wholly unconscious of danger.

The servants had all gone to bed, in another part of the house, and the old gentleman was just finishing up some complicated accounts before he, too, retired for the night.

With practiced hand, Barney Driver noiselessly turned the handle of the door.

The old gentleman calmly worked on.

Barney pushed the door open a little way and looked through the chink into the room.

Still wider went the door, and Barney Driver was inside the room.

Still the cashier, bending over his papers, was utterly unaware that he was not alone, save for the kittens sleeping at his feet.

Another moment and Barney was in the vault.

He looked around searchingly for the iron box in which was deposited the large sum that he knew was in the house, but it was not to be seen. It was safely locked in the strong small safe let into the stonework of the vault in the corner.

"Now for the time lock!"

The small clock-dial, by which the lock of the vault was so regulated that the door would swing open at the exact time marked, faced Barney on the inside of the heavy door.

The hands pointed to ten minutes past eight.

At that hour in the morning the door would open of itself after being closed by its spring-lock the night before. At least the lock would fly back, though the door could not actually open until the regular safe letter-lock combination had been turned by some one knowing the set of letters to be applied.

"Ten minutes past eight," muttered Barney. "A little too late to suit me. I'll just take the liberty of putting your clock back, Mr. Cashier."

He moved the hands until the clock-face showed half-past twelve.

"There, that's all right. The old man will never look at the clock. He knows it's set at ten minutes past eight, and he'll just shut the door as usual, when he goes to bed."

Thus thinking, Barney Driver prepared to make his exit.

Softly he stole from behind the door of the vault.

The cashier was sitting back in his chair, looking dreamily at the fire. He had finished his work for the night, and was enjoying a few minutes of quiet before retiring.

Barney Driver nodded his head with satisfaction as he stepped across the space between the two doors.

His foot caught in a rug and he fell forward against the door of the room with a loud crash.

The cashier started to his feet, and seizing a heavy glass paper-weight, hurled it with all his force at Barney Driver's head.

The latter ducked, and the paper-weight struck the door.

The next instant, Barney had the old man by the throat and was holding him down on the hearth-rug, while he felt in his pocket for a small piece of wood, with two pieces of string attached, with which he intended to gag his victim.

Barney Driver did not believe in murder, except as a last resort.

"Say a word and I'll bury my knife in your heart," he hissed in the cashier's ear.

The old gentleman struggled violently, but Barney Driver's strength was much more than a match for his own, and he was giving himself up, when a flash of intensely powerful light made the lamp in the room look dim by comparison, and Barney was pulled from the prostrate form of the cashier and hurled with resistless force to the other side of the room.

Barney gave a howl of dismay and horror as he saw *the Demon Doctor* stop to assist the cashier to his feet, and then, without stopping to wonder how this mysterious being had arrived so opportunely, the would-be burglar dashed from the house at the top of his speed.

CHAPTER X.

A CLIMB AND A SLIP.

We must now return to Lawrence Sinclair and Mike Carroll, whom we left in the dark hole under the room in the mine in which Barney Driver had imprisoned Lucette.

"Be gob! Mr. Sunclair. We are all alone here, an' be the powers, it's darker than purgatory. Haven't ye got a match?"

"Not one, Mike. We must get out of here without a light, if we get out at all."

"Widout a loight. Yis, an' widout a loife, too, I'm a-thinkin', unless we git out in a gintlemanly way pretty soon. Sure ye'll not be a shtayin' in here longer than ye kin help, I should think, wid yer swateheart in throuble, a-askin' for yez, wud yez, Mr. Sunclair?"

Lawrence clinched his hands as he thought of Lucette in the power of Barney Driver, and replied:

"No, Mike. By heavens! we *will* get out of this, and quickly, too. We must find some means to reach that trap."

"It's pretty hoigh," said Mike.

"It *is* pretty high," acquiesced Lawrence Sinclair.

"Ow!" grunted Mike, as he tumbled over a heap of rubbish and grazed his nose on a piece of broken slate.

"What's the trouble, Mike?"

"Och, nothin'. Sure a mon must expect to fall over himself in a murtherin' place loike this," grumbled Mike.

"Say Mike."

"Well?"

"I have it."

"You have? Then I wish yez 'u'd give it to me."

"I have hit on a way to get at that trap."

"What is it?" grunted Mike, who was cautiously feeling the sore spot on his nose, and was not disposed to be very enthusiastic upon any other subject.

"Come here."

"Faith, how can I kim to yez, whin I can't see where ye be?"

In spite of his professed inability to find his companion, Mike managed to step up to him guided by his voice.

Lawrence seized his hand.

"Look up, Mike. You see those chinks over our heads where the light shines through. That's the trap."

"Well, I know it."

"Now, if I lift you on my shoulders, don't you think you could reach it?"

Mike Carroll slapped his thigh in his admiration of Lawrence Sinclair's idea.

"Be gob. Mr. Sunclair, you've shtruck it. Av coorse I kin r'ache it from the shoulders uv yez. Let me climb up."

Lawrence helped the little Irishman, who was as active as a cat, to his shoulders.

"Steady, Mike. Can you reach it, kneeling?"

"Divil a r'ache! I'll have to shtand on yer shoulders. Shtand shtill, an' I'll soon be up."

Lawrence braced himself firmly, and Mike Carroll, who never thought of danger, when thoroughly interested in anything, stood up with a foot on each of Lawrence Sinclair's shoulders, and reached for the trap.

"Be jabers I've got it, Mr. Sinclair. Shtand firrrum wholle I push up the thrap."

He exerted all his strength, for the trap was a very heavy one, and pushed.

"Steady, Mike. It's hard to keep you balanced when you push that way. Is the trap giving?"

"Faith, an' it is," puffed Mike, "but it goes almoighty shtiff."

He gave another push with all his strength and the trap went up about six inches, letting a flood of light into the subterranean dungeon in which they were.

"Hurroo!" cried Mike, as forgetting where he stood, he attempted to perform a war-dance of triumph on Lawrence Sinclair's shoulders.

The result may be imagined.

Lawrence put up his hands quickly to try and prevent the inevitable catastrophe, but in vain.

Mike pawed wildly at the air as the trap fell with a crash, and then came tumbling headlong from his companion's shoulders.

"Ow! Howly Moses! Merciful saints! St. Pathrick save us! Ow! ow! ow!"

"Where are you?" asked Lawrence, as he felt around for his prostrate companion.

There was a great noise on the ground, a little distance away, like a quantity of rubbish dropping down a well, and Mike's voice, still uttering wails of anguish, became muffled.

"Ow, Mr. Sinclair, be kerful. Sure, I'm down a pit a million fate dape!" bowled Mike Carroll.

"A pit?"

"Yis; moind yerself, or ye'll be intil it, too. Good-by, Mr. Sinclair; ye'll nivir see poor Moik again. I'm kilt, and me corpse is phere the b'yes kin never howld a wake over it. Och, wurroo, wurroo!"

"Don't talk nonsense, Mike. You're worth a dozen corpses yet, and you'll get as good a wake as you could desire when you do die. Where the deuce are you?"

"Sorra a wan o' me knows, except that it's in a moighty damp place that I am."

Lawrence crawled carefully along until he reached the edge of the pit that Mike declared was a million feet deep.

He understood it at once.

It was a shaft sunk from one level to another to save boring through several hundred yards of solid earth from the main shaft.

Like every other part of the worked-out mine it was half full of rubbish, and was, moreover, wet from a spring that had found its way there from above.

"Are you hurt!" asked Lawrence.

"Well, now, be jabers, I don't belave I'm damaged at all, at all,

barring the scratch on the ind o' me nose that I got before," returned Mike, "but I'm wet and cowld, and it's as dark as the mischief down here."

"So it is up here, for that matter," said Lawrence. "Look out, I'm coming down."

"The saints purtect yez!" was Mike Carroll's devout adjuration.

The shaft had been braced with cross-pieces of scantling as well as planks against the wall.

On these pieces of scantling, Lawrence easily made his way down the shaft, stepping from one to the other, and clinging to chinks between the boards on the walls.

In a few seconds he stood in a pool of water at the bottom of the shaft, by the side of Mike Carroll.

As soon as he reached the spot, he looked around him in every direction, and started with a thrill of joy as he said:

"See, Mike, we are in a long passage, and, as sure as we are alive, I can see a faint glimmer of light in the distance."

"Well, I ain't quite sure that I am aloive, but I belave I kin see the loight."

Without another word the two plodded through the water and rubbish in the direction of the feeble glimmer that was to them indeed a star of hope.

The road was a rough one, but they did not notice that as they moved swiftly along, over heaps of rubbish, scattered boulders, masses of slate, and other obstructions that met them at every step.

"Moighty strange thing that light don't git any bigger," said Mike.

"We are nearly up to it, an' it looks just as shmall as it did at first."

"It is strange," said Lawrence, as his heart beat faster with an apprehension that perhaps, after all, the opening through which the blessed daylight shone might not be large enough for them to get through.

He increased his pace to a run closely followed by Mike.

The light still glimmered feebly.

Half a dozen yards, and the two stood by an opening big enough to get through, certainly, but that did not lead into the open air.

"We have only found our way to another prison," said Lawrence Sinclair, despondingly.

"Don't give up the ship yet, Mr. Sunclair," said Mike, cheerily. "Let's follow this thing to the ind, anyhow."

The Irishman sprung to the opening, and gave a yell of joy.

"Hurroo! Mr. Sunclair! Sure I can see the blessed stars, anyhow!"

"Stars! How is that?" asked Lawrence, as he followed his companion. Then, as he looked up and saw where they were, he said, in despairing tones: "Stars! Yes, certainly; and the top of the earth is as much out of our reach as they are."

"Arrah, how, Mr. Sunclair, I dunno about that. Be gob, I think as we'll be standing on top of the 'arth afore we reach the stars."

"I do not see how, Mike! Here we are at the bottom of a shaft, the sides of which are smooth boards, without a chink big enough for either the hands or feet. If you can tell me how we are going to get out of it, I wish you would do it!"

"Don't you see that thing phwat's a-hanging over the head uv yez?"

"Yes. It's the old cage that used to take the miners up and down, years ago, when the mine was being worked. But what's the use of that? It's so old and rusty that it would fall to pieces if it were used. Not that there is any fear of our using it. It is at least twelve feet over our heads. We could never reach it, if we wanted to do so."

"C'u'dn't we? Well, now, whist a minute. I think we kin get hould of that cage, and I think we'll get out of this by it, too, begorra!"

"You're hopeful, Mike; but I'd like to know how you are going to do it," said Lawrence, listlessly, as he sat down on a pile of broken slate, and thought of Lucette's peril, while he was powerless to help her.

It was this thought that unmanned him whenever it occurred to him.

Mike Carroll did not appear to notice his companion's despondency, as he chattered away:

"Now, Mr. Sunclair, I want to call your attition to the fact that there's two cages a-hangin' in this 'ere shaft—wan of 'em a great deal hoigher than the other, d'ye moind?"

Lawrence looked up and nodded assent.

"Very well, then. Yer see, when wan goes up, the other cooms down 'cause they bees balanced, and they can't both coom down thegither. See?"

Again Lawrence nodded. The little Irishman seemed to be talking just to keep up the spirits of both, and the young man appreciated his efforts.

Mike did not seem to be distressed over the taciturnity of the other. He was too full of the scheme he had in his mind to notice or think much about anything else.

"Well, now, Muster Sunclair, yer see that the iron cage phwat you say is rusty—and ye're roight about that, for it is moighty rusty—hangs on a chain."

"Yes, I believe it does, though I can't see it very plainly," said Lawrence.

"No; the shtars are moighty pritty things a-twinklin' an' a-shparklin' in the skoye bevant, but they don't give as much loight as an electric lamp, for a fact. Well, anyhow, as I was a-sayin', the cage be hangin' to a chain, and, moreover, be the same token, the ither wan above hangs on the ither ind of that same chain."

"But what does all this talk amount to, when you can't reach either of the cages?" asked Lawrence.

"Phwait awhile, an' I'll show yez," said Mike, with a triumphant air of mystery as he went over to the opening by which they had entered the shaft, and picked up a coil of rope, with a stout hook at the end. "There, phwat d'ye say to that?"

Lawrence Sinclair sprung to his feet as if endowed with new life.

"By heavens, Mike! I believe we shall be able to escape, after all. I see your idea exactly."

"Glad of it, Mr. Sinclair. But I want you to explain wan thing that's been a-poozzlin' me iver since I've kim down in this unchristian place."

"What is it?"

"Explain to me how it is I kin see shtars bevant in the daylight. Unless I'm bewitched, I dunno how to account for it, be gob!"

Lawrence Sinclair laughed as he told Mike that it was a fact in natural science with which every miner was familiar. A person at the bottom of a deep hole, such as a mine or a well, can always see the stars in the daylight.

"Begorra, thin, that's a wonderful thing, sure as you're born," said Mike.

"Many things are wonderful in nature when you come to think about them," said Lawrence. "Now about that rope. I suppose we must throw up that hook, try and catch the cage, and pull it down."

"Thrue for yez, Mr. Sunclair. Ye shtruck it the first time."

Without wasting any more time in words, Lawrence took the rope, which was about fifteen feet long, and coiled it loosely in his left hand. Then, seizing the hook in his right, he threw it with all his force toward the iron cage suspended above his head.

"Be the Lord, Mr. Sunclair, you've got it the first toime. You've just caught that cage as nate as I c'u'd ha' done it meself."

"Well, help me pull it down, then, Mike," said Lawrence, as he vainly tugged at the rope without stirring the cage or its rusty iron chain.

Mike seized the rope and added his strength to Sinclair's in trying to move the cage.

In vain.

"Well, Mr. Sunclair, I guess we'll have to cloimb," said Mike.

Before Lawrence could answer, the active Irishman had gone up the rope, hand over hand, and was hanging to the cage.

No sooner had he got a firm hold upon it than there was a thunderous whirring sound, a creaking of wheels and a groaning of machinery, and the cage came down with a run.

"Be the powers, did yees iver see anything loike thot, now," said Mike, with a comical look of surprise. "Begorra, we'll have to cloimb up the chain now sure."

This was an easy thing for the two powerful, active men. They did not hesitate a moment in grasping the rusty chain, and in less than ten minutes both were near the top.

Lawrence was the first to reach the surface. He climbed up until he came to the large iron "drum" on which the chain was suspended, Mike Carroll being several feet below.

"Shtick your fut out at the side, Mr. Sunclair. Then you can step off," said Mike.

Lawrence followed the suggestion, and reached for the side of the shaft with his right foot.

As he did so, he received a blow on the back of his head that made him release his hold of the rope and pitch down the shaft, while the voice of Oscar, the negro, said, tauntingly:

"Whar was you gwine, anyhow, boss?"

CHAPTER XI.

THE STRUGGLE IN THE SKIFF.

When Barney Driver ran from the house of the bank cashier, after seeing the Demon Doctor standing like an avenging spirit in the parlor, he was filled with superstitious fears.

He never slackened his headlong pace until he reached the wooden bridge that spanned the chasm before referred to. When he got there, however, his natural coolness and insolent self-possession returned to his aid.

"Pshaw! That old fellow frightened me, with his confounded electric lamp. I believe he will scare me to death yet before I make my barghin with him. I wonder if he knew it was me."

He walked slowly down the winding path to the railroad track, thinking deeply.

"Oh, he didn't know me, I'm sure; and if he was to say he did, I would prove an *alibi*. Barney Driver isn't to be caught easily, if he knows himself. The job has gone up for this night, though, unless—"

He put his hand to his long knife mechanically and walked more swiftly down the hill.

"Ah, there are Oscar and Curly. I can just see them down there outside the lock, though it's as dark as a nigger's pocket. The moon has nearly gone out of sight."

He crossed the railroad track, ran down the sloping bank to the water's edge and whistled softly.

An answering whistle came back over the river.

The boat that he had noticed near the dam was shaking in the water that was pouring over the dam with a loud rattle and slam that could be heard for half a mile down the river, notwithstanding that the still back-water below the dam gave no intimation of the turmoil above.

"I wouldn't get so near the dam if I were they," muttered Barney, as he watched the frail craft—the same in which he was first introduced to the reader—bobbing about in the surf. "They will be over the wickets if they ain't careful."

It was evident that the occupants of the boat were either careless or did not appreciate the power of the current made by the fall of the water over the row of wickets stretching across the river, and known as Davis Island Dam.

"Lord! They'll be over the wickets as sure as shooting! What the deuce is the matter with them?"

The men in the boat bent to their oars as the boat swerved around in the strong current at the wickets, and with three or four powerful strokes propelled their craft toward the shore.

"Hurry up, Oscar! Pull hard, Curly! Wind that log, there, Oscar. Back water—back—back, I tell you. Now, pull all! That's it! Steady! Steady!"

Barney Driver thus directing his two men in the boat, watched them as they made their way toward him.

He kept on glancing furtively behind him, for he did not know how soon some one might come from the house he had intended to rob, and though his superstitious fears of the Demon Doctor were allayed, he did not attempt to belittle the power that the electric student possessed by means of the wonderful natural force he had brought under control.

"Never mind about grounding the boat, Oscar," he said as the nose of the craft came within a few feet of him. "I can jump. Move forward, Oscar, and I'll jump into her bows."

The negro, who was sitting with his back to Barney pulled his large slouch hat down over his brows, and obeyed the order silently, while Curly Bob in the stern rested on his oars and waited for Barney to jump.

Barney seated himself in the stern and his two companions pulled into the middle of the river.

"Now make for the city as quick as you like," said Barney. "The job here is bu'sted and we want to settle things at the crib in the mines and keep shady for a while, I've got a little business to settle with that Demon Doctor, curse him!—and then, Oscar, good-by to this part of the country, eh?"

The negro grunted acquiescence and worked steadily at his oars.

"I'll tell you all about this thing to-night, after awhile, Oscar," continued Barney, graciously; "though you don't seem to be very anxious about it. But perhaps you don't care about a share of $100,000."

Again Oscar grunted, but as it was too dark to distinguish his face, Barney did not know whether the grunt signified assent or dissent.

"Look out, there! Where are you rowing to? You are taking us straight across instead of down the river. Why, we are nearly onto the wickets," said Barney, as he turned around and tried to pierce the gloom behind him.

Ere he could say another word, Oscar had sprung from his seat, and with a well-directed blow sent Barney Driver sprawling in the bottom of the boat.

Barney, though utterly at a loss to know the meaning of the attack, grappled with his assailant, and exerted his utmost strength to arise.

In vain; the other held him down with a grip of iron, and seemed determined to choke him into insensibility.

"Wha—what's the matter, Oscar? Curly, help me! I believe this black fool's crazy!" yelled Barney, desperately.

"Be gob, an' I think he's sensible, thin!" said a well-known voice, as Curly Bob leaned over Barney and, thrusting his face close to that of the prostrate ruffian, showed the grinning features of Mike Carroll.

"You villain! Where is that young lady?" demanded the man with the slouch hat, whom Barney had addressed as Oscar, but who he now saw in the faint light of the stars was none other than Lawrence Sinclair.

"Trapped, by Heavens!" growled Barney the Blacksheep, involuntarily.

"Thrapped, be St. Pathrick! Yis, that's it, me handsome b'ye. Hould him tight, Mr. Sunclair, an' if he don't tell yez where he has put yer swateheart we'll doomp him in the wather an' let him shwim to perdition."

"I'll make it hot for both of you, yet!" hissed Driver.

"Indade, thin, an' we'll make it cowld for you if you don't howld yer whist. Let's doomp him in the river, jist for loock. We can ash him out ag'in, I guess," suggested Mike.

The coolness of this proposition rather startled Barney.

"Do you want to commit murder?" he asked.

"Have you *committed* murder?" was Lawrence Sinclair's response. "Where is Miss Le Feyre? I swear you shall never get out of this boat alive unless you will promise to take me to her."

Barney Driver laughed sardonically.

"All right. Kill me, if you like, and you'll never find that girl if you hunt for a century. She is where she will have to stay until I tell her to go."

The slight shiver of horror that ran through Lawrence Sinclair's frame told Barney Driver that this was his best card to play. As long as he could make Lawrence Sinclair and the Demon Doctor believe that he had Lucette hidden away in some of the secret recesses of the worked-out mine, he had not much fear of anything from them, either through law or physically.

Just now, however, his taunts did not help him materially with Lawrence Sinclair, for in the midst of his sardonic laugh, the young man's hands closed with a tighter grip on his throat, and he thought his plans would be brought to a premature close then and there.

"Tell me where she is?" repeated Lawrence.

"I won't!" was the sullen answer.

"Then die!" said Lawrence, desperately, as he tried to beat out the brains of his enemy against the bottom of the boat.

So intent was Lawrence in trying to wring the secret from Barney Driver, that he had not noticed the loud roar of the water rushing over the dam, or that the craft was drifting dangerously near the wickets.

Mike Carroll, however, suddenly became aware that the white foam boiling under the boat was caused by the swirl at the dam, and he howled:

"Look, Mr. Sunclair. We're a-goin' over this young Navagary, an' we'll all be dhrowned, as sure as we're aloive, so we will. Ow! Ow!"

He seized a pair of the oars and bent all his strength toward keeping the craft away from the fatal spot.

"Will you tell me where you have hidden that young lady?" repeated Lawrence, not heeding the danger from the water.

There was a desperately triumphant gleam in the eyes of Barney Driver.

He knew that the boat was surely being drawn into the current, and that it would go over the dam unless Lawrence Sinclair took a pair of oars and helped his companion, and he was determined to die with them rather than reveal what the young man would have given his life to discover.

"I will not tell you," he hissed, "because I do not choose to let any young squirt dictate to me. I am a desperate man, and I mean what I say!"

"Ow! Be the powers, Mr. Sunclair, we're goin' over the place, onless you help me. Let the blagguard go, and you take an oar and pull," yelled Mike.

"You had better take an oar. We shall be over the dam in another minute, and then it won't matter much about anything. The chances are a hundred to one that we shall all be smashed to pieces among those logs that are tearing about in the foam just below there," said Barney, tauntingly.

"I don't care!" said Lawrence. "I'll take my chance with you!"

The boat swung round and round, and every instant seemed as if it would go over the wickets with the floating rubbish that was being dashed into the seething caldron below.

Mike Carroll worked with all his might at his oars, and so far had kept the craft from the almost certain destruction that appeared to await it.

The stars filled the heavens now, and the two men struggling in the bottom of the dancing skiff could look into each other's eyes.

Each saw there only dogged determination, that nothing but death could quench.

With a mighty effort, Barney Driver pushed his assailant back and arose to his knees.

The boat rocked wildly, and Mike Carroll pulled at his oars for dear life.

The two men struggling in a death-grip cared nothing for the peril that threatened them in the rushing waters and clashing timbers that would grind a man to pieces as easily as if he were a biscuit.

Lawrence still had the advantage of his opponent, who was powerless to arise from his knees.

Every muscle of the men was strained to the utmost.

"Begorra, ye'll be overboard if yez don't shtop yer foolin'!" said Mike. "Knock him into the wather and be done with it, Mr. Sunclair."

The little Irishman saw that the boat must go over the dam in another second or two, unless there was a turn of affairs.

"Curse you! Here is an end of you, anyhow," howled Barney Driver, as with a superhuman effort, he gained his feet.

"Ow! We're gone, begorra!" yelled Mike Carroll.

There was a second of intense excitement as Barney Driver and Lawrence Sinclair grasped each other and put forth their utmost strength in the tossing boat, now half full of water.

"Look out! Be gob! the dam's just forninst us!" cried Mike, as he gave another tug at his oars.

One more effort on the part of the combatants, one more yell from Mike, and the skiff turned over on the very top of the wickets over which the flood was rushing, tumbling and boiling.

Lawrence felt himself strike against something in the water that loosened his hold on his enemy, and then, he did not know how, he was dragged from the very jaws of death and found himself lying on the bottom of another boat, with Mike by his side, while a pair of powerful arms urged the boat with swift strokes away from the dam.

And Barney Driver, as he went over the fall, amidst a terrible din of rushing torrents and grinding logs, saw, ere he lost consciousness, a tall, white-bearded figure standing up in a spectral-looking boat, with a pale-faced boy at his feet, while a powerful bluish-white light threw a weird reflection over the waste of waters on every side.

CHAPTER XII.

THE FACE THAT CLARA SAW.

"Just in time, eh, Deadhold!" said the Demon Doctor, calmly, as his powerful strokes took the boat swiftly away from the dam.

"Yes, but I wish I hadn't been too ill and weak to help you," said Frank Trenton, sadly. "I believe I am getting more useless all the time."

"Nonsense! You have been losing so much sleep. It is no wonder that you are ill," said the Demon Doctor, kindly. "We had better go around and look for that fellow. He is just likely to have made the shore in spite of the dam. Men of his stripe are not easily killed."

"I do not think it is worth while," said Frank. "If he is not drowned he has escaped before this. He would never stay around the river-bank now. There are too many on his trail."

The Demon Doctor hesitated. He felt that there had been too much dallying with this desperado. He almost doubted Frank Trenton's wisdom in giving the fellow so much rope, as it were, but the boy had assured him that he had a purpose in it, and the Doctor had therefore allowed Barney to proceed as far as he had, even to entering the house of his friend, Alexander Golden, of which project Frank Trenton, or Deadhold, had full knowledge before, having planned with the Demon Doctor to catch the thief in the very perpetration of his crime.

Now it seemed that, though they had accumulated more proof of Barney Driver's criminal character, they were going to lose him after all by either death or escape.

"Professor," said Lawrence, as, having got his senses about him again, he put his lips close to the Demon Doctor's ear.

"Well, young man, what is it?" asked the Demon Doctor, rather coldly.

He had an idea that Lawrence was disposed to admire his daughter, and he did not know exactly whether to approve of him as a prospective son-in-law or not.

Lawrence put his lips closer to his ear, and whispered a few words.

Their effect was electrical.

The Demon Doctor clutched the young man by the shoulder and looked him piercingly in the eyes.

"Impossible!" he groaned, hoarsely.

"No; it is not impossible," was Lawrence's eager response. "I saw her in that man's power in the old mine, and heard her call upon her father for help. Then she was taken away, and I saw her no more."

"Great Heavens! This is awful!" groaned the Demon Doctor, pressing his hands to his forehead. "My daughter! my daughter!"

"Don't get excited," said Frank Trenton. "But tell me what is the matter."

As soon as an emergency requiring the aid of a clear head and a ready expedient arose, the weak boy became Deadhold, the astute detective, and he seemed able to grapple with any difficulty that might face him.

The Demon Doctor recognized this fact, and briefly, in as calm a manner as he could, told what he had just heard from Lawrence Sinclair, that his beloved daughter had been decoyed from her home and was now a prisoner in the power of Barney the Blacksheep.

"Row all toward the city," said Deadhold, as we prefer to call him when he is showing that he is indeed one of the most reliable and astute detectives in the country.

"Faith, I'll take a pair of oars meself," said Mike Carroll, who had remained perfectly quiet since being dragged into the boat, trying to get his obfusticated ideas somewhat cleared.

The Demon Doctor took a pair of oars, sitting in the middle of the boat. Lawrence Sinclair rowed stroke with one oar, and Mike Carroll in the bow pulled another. This style of rowing is known as "randydan."

With the three men pulling with a will, the skiff, which was built for speed as well as for safety, cut through the water so swiftly, in spite of the fact that the current was against it, that it soon covered the four miles between the dam and the spot where Barney Driver's shanty-boat lay moored.

Deadhold had taken command of the expedition as soon as he heard that Lucette had been abducted by Barney.

He knew—or thought he knew—where to find her. Barney Driver's shanty-boat had only been occupied by him a short time, and he (Barney) flattered himself that no one was aware of the fact that he had taken possession of it.

But Deadhold was a detective, and in the character of the innocent boy, Frank Trenton, had made it his business to become acquainted with all of Barney Driver's haunts.

He felt pretty sure that he should find Lucette in the shanty-boat. At all events, that was the place from which to start a clue.

Neither he or the Demon Doctor had been to the latter's home in Mount Washington since they left it on the previous night to search through the mines for Barney Driver's secret headquarters underground, and until told by Lawrence Sinclair of Lucette's troubles, her father had supposed her safely at home, where he often left her for days and nights at a time when his studies took him away on solitary walks or cruises in his favorite row-boat.

It was still dark when the boat, propelled by the three oarsmen, ran abreast of the shanty-boat.

"This is the place," said Deadhold briefly.

The Demon Doctor and Lawrence Sinclair simultaneously jumped on the deck of the shanty-boat, and knocked at the securely fastened door.

There was no response and they knocked again, louder than before.

Then a female voice was heard, asking timidly:

"Is that you, Barney?"

Without waiting for an answer, the door was opened, and in the dim light burning in the cabin, the slight form of Clara, Barney Driver's wife, stood revealed.

"Where is—" commenced Lawrence Sinclair impetuously.

"Wait a minute," interposed Deadhold, who had by this time joined the other two on the deck of the shanty-boat.

The boy stepped up to the trembling girl, and spoke quietly to her in low, reassuring tones.

"No," said Clara, "she is not here now. She was here, and—and—Barney told me to take care of her until he came back—"

"The villain!" interrupted Lawrence.

"But yesterday I fainted away for some reason, and when I recovered, I found a Pittsburg detective here who had put handcuffs on her wrists because he thought she had murdered me."

The Demon Doctor clinched his fists.

"Of course he saw that he was mistaken when I came to, and after looking through the cabins, and turning things over, he went away."

"Well?" said the Demon Doctor.

"Well then the young lady and I became very good friends, and when she told me how she had been torn away from her home, and how she was afraid her father would be nearly crazy about her, I told her to go home, and I would face Barney when he came. I know he will beat me when he comes, though."

The girl broke down and cried pitifully. She seemed to be such a poor, weak creature, that it was no wonder Mike Carroll, who had sat quietly in the skiff, listening, should exclaim with true Irish fervor:

"Be gob! I'd almost give up me hopes of ould Ireland's freedom, if I c'u'd give that murtherin' willain' just wan thoomp ahint his big ear!"

"You sha'n't face him alone, my poor girl," said the Demon Doctor. "Come with us to my house for the present, and I'll intercede with Barney for you."

It needed but little persuasion to induce the girl to go with the party to Mount Washington. She was in mortal terror of her husband, devotedly as she loved him.

An hour later the Demon Doctor without touching it, caused his front door to fly open, and with another secret manipulation of the electric devices that surrounded his house, caused a flood of light to pervade the hall and his own private study.

Behind him stood Deadhold, Clara, Lawrence Sinclair and Mike Carroll, watching closely this illustration of the power of science over apparently inanimate objects.

Before any one one could make a remark, however, a white robed figure came tripping down the stairs, and Lucette was in the arms of her father.

"Oh, father, where *have* you been? I have been sitting in my room, waiting for daylight. I felt that some evil must have befallen you."

It is needless to repeat all the explanations that ensued.

Suffice it to say that, acting upon Deadhold's suggestion, when the Demon Doctor had stated that there was plenty of room in his house for everybody, there was a general movement of the whole party to their respective couches.

Clara and Lucette went to the latter's room; Lawrence Sinclair and Mike Carroll were accommodated in a plain but comfortable attic, the Demon Doctor retired to his own bedroom adjoining the study, and Deadhold, at his own request, lay down on the sofa in the study.

"We must explore that cave to-morrow, professor," were Deadhold's last words. "I think I have a clue to the secret that Barney the Blacksheep wants to sell to you, and it is in that worked-out mine."

"I trust entirely to you," was the reply of the Demon Doctor.

"Good-night, professor."

"Good-night."

In Lucette's room, where the two girls—herself and Clara—were retiring in the dark, Clara stood for a minute at the window, looking out into the black night.

Suddenly she started and uttered a faint scream.

"What's the matter, Clara?" asked Lucette, running to her.

"Nothing," was the reply, as the trembling girl pressed her hand to her side. "It was a sort of spasm. I often have them."

"You are worn out," said Lucette, sympathetically. "You need rest."

"Ye—yes," acquiesced Clara. "That's what it is, I need rest."

She spoke mechanically, for her eyes were fixed with a stony stare upon the entrance to the old mine, which was lighted up by the lamp from the Demon Doctor's study.

In that glare of light she saw a white, haggard face, its eyes looking vacantly at the Demon Doctor's window, but with a stare that seemed not to see anything.

The face was the face of her husband, Barney Driver.

"Go to bed, Clara," said Lucette, kindly.

Mechanically she obeyed, but all through her dreams was that terrible staring face, and she felt as if her sleep was one long nightmare.

She thought the face looked like that of a drowned man, who might in life have been her husband.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE DEMON OF NATURAL GAS.

How Barney Driver managed to escape the deadly peril in which he was placed when he was drawn over the wickets of the dam by the resistless torrent he could hardly have told.

He remembered being tossed about in the seething flood, with the great logs crashing against him on all sides.

He felt himself drawn under the water while passing over the wickets, and he held his breath until stars danced before his eyes and his head seemed as if it would burst.

Then he was thrown hither and thither, up and down, backward and forward, until, his senses seeming to come back to him, he struck out boldly for the shore below the great lock.

For a few minutes his strokes, powerful as they were, seemed to have no effect.

Then, as if tired of him, the torrent threw him away from the swirl at the foot of the dam, and he found himself in the nearly calm slack-water.

It was an easy thing then for a strong swimmer to reach the shore, and in a very few minutes he stood on the river-bank, shaking himself in his wet clothing and listening to the steady thud-thud of the Demon Doctor's boat, as the three men in it plied their oars with clock-work regularity.

The still night brought every sound to his ear.

"It's all right, gentlemen; but my turn will come. You have got the better of me to-night, and beaten me out of a fortune. But I still have that girl in my power and I'll make Mr. Demon Doctor pay me well for my secret—that isn't such a great secret, after all."

He chuckled as he climbed the bank and walked swiftly along the railroad track toward the city.

He had only gone a few hundred yards when he noticed a small skiff chained to a wooden post at the water's edge.

"Not much use changing a boat when the post can be pulled out as easily as this," he muttered with a grin, as with one vigorous wrench, he tore the post from its insecure hold in the loose, crumbling earth, soaked with water.

There were no oars in the boat, but, an old barrel that chanced to be lying near was soon kicked to pieces, and two of its staves made excellent paddles, which he used dextrously.

He reached the shore at the foot of Mount Washington while the Demon Doctor was parleying with Clara at the shanty-boat.

Knowing the locality so well it did not take Barney long to reach the top of Mount Washington.

He wanted to get to his secret hiding-place in the mine, where he hoped to find Oscar and Curly Bob and get some explanation of their absence, and find out how Lawrence Sinclair and Mike Carroll had managed to masquerade in these places.

Perhaps a little explanation of this may not be out of place at this time.

It will be remembered that when Lawrence Sinclair was about to step off the chain to the side of the mine he was struck by Oscar, the colored man, and thrown down the pit.

He did not fall far, however. Fortunately, Mike was on the watch, and putting out his hand, was enabled to save him from what would have undoubtedly been a fatal fall.

Oscar and Curly Bob, supposing he had fallen to the bottom, were off their guard for a moment.

Lawrence and Mike quickly recovering themselves jumped out of the mine from the chain, and, springing upon the other two, overpowered them, after a sharp struggle.

As Lawrence forced Oscar to the ground something dropped out of the negro's pocket.

Examination showed it to be a scrap of paper on which was written:

"Davis Island Dam—11 o'clock to-night—skiff."

"An' bedad, we'll keep the app'intment," said Mike Carroll. "For there is the skiff down there in the wather beyant; I've seen Barney the Blacksheep in it many's a toime."

With some difficulty, they got Oscar and Curly Bob down in the cage to the bottom of the mine, and forced them to go into the corridor from whence Lawrence and Mike had made their way to the shaft.

Some stout cord that Oscar had in his possession had afforded means to bind the two prisoners, and when they were finally left lying on the floor in the darkness of the damp corridor, they were, as Mike expressed it, as "hilpless as troosed chickens and as shtiff as b'iled owls, bedad!"

Lawrence carefully bolted the heavy oaken door that guarded the outlet of the corridor to the space at the foot of the shaft, and when he and Mike climbed the chain once more and went down to the boat to keep the Davis Island Dam engagement, he felt that he had safely disposed of Oscar and Curly Bob for the time being.

To return to Barney the Blacksheep.

It was with weary steps that he reached the opening of the old mine and walked straight toward the secret chamber where we first saw him in the mine.

For some unaccountable reason, he felt as if he could not enter the room.

He went to the door, which, as we know, was generally barred and bolted, but which, when empty was secured by secret fastenings from the outside.

He placed his hands on the door, but still he did not open it.

"Pshaw! What's the matter with me?" he muttered. "I believe I'm getting nervous."

He strolled through the corridors again, with every inch of which he was familiar, and went to the entrance, facing the Demon Doctor's house, standing there for a few minutes in deep thought.

It was then that he was seen by Clara.

"Well, it is no use. I must attend to this business of mine and get things settled up. I have had enough of this part of the country. I'll just go get the swag and be done with it. I wonder where Oscar and Curly are. If I find them loafing around here after I told them I wanted them for a job, I'll—"

The desperado clinched his fists and scowled darkly as the thought crossed his brain that perhaps they had betrayed him.

"I'll soon find out, anyhow," he said to himself, fiercely, as he made his way to the secret room again.

With quick, determined movements, he unfastened the door and threw it open.

One hasty glance around showed him that the room had not been disturbed since he was last in it.

There was the table overturned, just as it had been thrown in the struggle with Lawrence Sinclair, while the chairs and other furniture were in the same positions in which he had left them.

He went into the room, locked and barred the door and examined the opening in the opposite wall, through which Mike Carroll had entered so unceremoniously two days before.

Everything was secure.

"Oscar!" he called.

No answer.

He opened the trap in the floor and called again.

"I have an idea that those fellows are somewhere around here. I guess they got wind that there was danger and they just kept shady and let me take my chances. But I'll make it hot for them when I get my hands on them."

The natural-gas flame was still throwing its glare around the room.

"Oscar!" he called down the trap.

No answer.

"Well, I'll get this thing settled myself."

He shut down the trap and carefully examined every mode of egress and ingress to see that he was not likely to be disturbed.

Then he took a shovel and began industriously digging at the pile of slate and rubbish to which reference has already been made several times.

A few shovelfuls of the stuff had been removed, and then the shovel struck something hard with a ringing sound.

"Ah, there you are, my beauty, safe and sound," muttered Barney, as a smile spread over his rugged features, while his eyes glistened with the fire of avarice.

He soon removed the rest of the rubbish that hid his treasure.

Then he threw aside his shovel with a low cry of triumph and pleasure.

A square, iron box, such as Express companies use for the conveyance of money and valuables.

Another careful look around the room, and he took a key from a pocket inside his shirt and raised the lid.

A quantity of dirty newspapers was all that was revealed.

Barney took the trouble now to walk all around the room and look carefully at every place where it might be possible for an intruder to effect an entrance. Everything was silent and safe, and he was quite alone.

He returned to his box and began slowly and cautiously to take out the old newspapers one by one.

Soon the real contents of the box met his eye.

Jewels of all kinds, some in cases and some lying loose were there, while thousands of dollars, apparently in gold and greenbacks were stored away at the bottom.

"Good!" said Barney, in a rapture of satisfaction, as he took up the rings, bracelets, brooches and earrings one by one and examined their luster at different angles in the light of the natural gas flame.

Then he took up one particular ring, a solitaire diamond of large size and remarkable fire.

"Where did that boy get this ring?" he mused, as he placed it on his finger. "I thought when I took this from him the other night, on the river, that I had settled his business forever. I felt sure then that he knew too much about me, but if I had known that he was Deadhold, he would never have lived over that night, either in the name of Frank Trenton or any other."

It was indeed a beautiful ring, and far outshone anything else in the box, splendid as its contents were.

"There are about $20,000 worth of stuff here," he reflected. "Oscar's share is to be $1,000 and Curly's $500—if I feel like giving it to them," with a chuckle.

He proceeded to take out the contents of the box and dispose them in pockets about his clothing.

The jewels he placed in paper, in little heaps, leaving the cases in the box. He did not want to be burdened with anything save the valuables. Soon all the blazing stones, in their handsome settings, were hidden away in his inside pockets.

"Now for the ready cash," he muttered. "That's always useful, and I may want all I can get before I get safely away from this part of the country."

He had just completed his task, and after carelessly shoveling back the rubbish and slate so as to hide the box again, was examining a splendidly finished Smith & Wesson self-cocking six-shooter, when he started, holding the weapon, his finger on the trigger, as if ready for instant action.

"What was that?" he said, softly. "I thought I heard a voice."

His face turned a sickly yellow in the reflection of the natural gas flame.

He hastily buttoned his sack coat, and, revolver still in hand, bent down to listen.

A faint cry struck his ear.

"Sure enough! There is some one, and I believe it comes from below."

He pulled up the trap and peered into the darkness, but could not distinguish anything.

He took a lantern from a corner of the room, and lighting it, closed it carefully and held it down the trap opening.

"I don't believe there is any one there. They must have got down that little shaft in the corner."

"Barney!"

"By gracious! It's Oscar! What in the deuce is he doing down there? Well, I'll find out very soon, anyhow."

He quickly brought a rope with a hook from a corner of the room and let himself down. Then he went over to the shaft in the corner and looked down.

Oscar's voice sounded nearer now, but still he could not see him.

With a bound he was down the shaft and stumbling along the corridor to the spot from whence the negro's voice, crying "Barney," could still be heard.

"Where are you, Oscar?" cried Barney.

"Hyar, boss, an' nearly done played out. I'se gwine to die, I know, an' Curly Bob, he done gone dead, already, I b'lieve."

"Don't be a fool! Where are you?" was Barney's impatient response. Then he added: "Hello, what's this? I feel kind of hard to breathe. It is terribly close down here."

He went on a few yards further and stopped, while he opened the collar of his shirt. He felt a tightness around the throat that he could not account for.

"Look out, boss," said Oscar, "dere's danger 'roun' hyar, suah. I done shet dat doah, 'cause there's—there's—"

"What? Why don't you say what you mean?" said Barney, impatiently, as he felt his head swim, while his breath came quicker and shorter.

"Why boss, I—I ca—an't desackly say what I wants, 'cause—'cause I feels sick, an' I b'lieve Curly Bob is a goner; I do, suah!"

Barney Driver stumbled along until he came to a door, tightly closed, from the other side of which Oscar's voice proceeded.

Barney felt very sick now. Sparks seemed to dance before his eyes, there was a humming and buzzing in his ears and he could not keep his mind under control without great exertion.

"What is it, Oscar?" he asked, faintly.

"Why, boss. Doan't you open dat doah! I guess the nat'ral gas done be cscapin' somewhere, so I shut the doah, but there's 'nuff of it got through the chinks to choke Curly, an' I doan' b'lieve I kin hold out much longer."

"Natural gas!" repeated Barney, as a thrill of horror ran through him, while the stars danced faster than ever before his eyes, and the noise in his ears became louder and more bewildering.

Too well he knew the terrible power of this but little understood product of Mother Earth. He knew that natural gas, while ten times more deadly in its effects than the regular manufactured gas, used in all parts of the civilized world, was still apparently innocent until the victim was fairly in its clutch.

He knew that natural gas was entirely odorless, and that it gave no signs of its presence by the strong, unpleasant smell that always gives warning of the escape of regular coal gas.

It was this peculiarity that had made it possible for Barney to be nearly overcome by it before he knew that it was escaping around him at all.

In different parts of the mine the gas existed, as he knew, he having taken advantage of it in the room above to sink a pipe into the small "pocket," as the gas deposits are called, and thus furnish himself with light.

But he was not prepared for the leakage that had probably killed Curly Bob and from which he himself might not escape.

He felt that he must get away and recover himself before he could attempt the rescue of Oscar.

He turned around to walk back, and stumbled over a huge boulder that lay in his path.

As he fell, his lantern struck the boulder and smashed the glass.

For perhaps a thousandth part of a second there was a low sound, like a rumbling sigh. Then, with a mighty roar and crash and boom—that shook Mount Washington to its foundations, and made the good people of Pittsburg and Allegheny across the river, turn in their beds—a large portion of the worked-out mine was laid bare to the heavens.

The remains of Barney, Oscar and Curly Bob were never found, and it was supposed that the force of the explosion drove them further into the mines, where the tumbling masses of dislodged rock, slate and earth covered them beyond recovery.

Thus ended Barney Driver's hopes of living comfortably on his ill-gotten gains in another part of the country. He died with his plunder clasped to his bosom.

CHAPTER XIV.

CONCLUSION—SOME MYSTERIES CLEARED UP.

"Do not grieve," the Demon Doctor was saying kindly, the next day, to Clara. "But try and clear his name as much as you can by making restitution."

An elderly gentleman, with gray hair and a kindly expression, was sitting in the Demon Doctor's own chair, while Lucette, Lawrence Sinclair and Mike Carroll were listening to a narrative told by Clara.

"Here is the paper that Barney wanted to sell to you," said Clara. "He gave it to me to mind, and told me never to let it go out of my hands until he asked me for it."

The Demon Doctor took it from her hand and glanced over it.

"Why, this is the will of Alex. Golden, in which he bequeaths all his property, real and personal, to his twin nieces, Mabel and Lucette, who, to the best of his belief, are now in Paris (that is, at the date of the will, sixteen years ago), but whose exact whereabouts he cannot tell. The will then goes on to say that, having quarreled with his brother, Wilton, several years ago, over a trifling matter, he wishes to provide for his two children in the future, in the hope of making some amends at least for his unbrotherly conduct."

"Begorra, now, that Alexander Golden must have been a foine man," said Mike Carroll, who had been listening to the Demon Doctor's words with undoubted interest. "I wonder if he's alolve."

"Yes," said the gray-headed man, suddenly. "I am Alexander Golden."

"Och, be gob! Who'd ha' thought it?" said Mike, opening his eyes very wide.

"Yes," said the gray-headed man, who was indeed none other than the cashier whom Barney Driver had attempted to rob on the evening before. "My name is Alexander Golden, and I wrote that will many years ago. But, is there not something more?"

"Yes," said the Demon Doctor. "Here is a piece of paper attached, containing more writing."

"P'raps it's a coodoysil," said Mike.

The Demon Doctor read from it:

"My two nieces can be identified in a certain way. On the arm of each, half-way between the wrist and the elbow, is a small white mark. That on Mabel is in the form of a crescent, and that on Lucette a star. The devices, which are natural birth-marks, are very clearly defined, a physician having stated in my presence, when the children were babies, that the signs would be as distinguishable when they grew to womanhood as in infancy."

Without a word the Demon Doctor took Lucette's hand and bared her arm.

The star was plainly marked!

"At last," said the Demon Doctor, "my Lucette has found her real name."

"I have no name but yours, father," said Lucette, placing her arms around his neck. "I have often heard how you saved the lives of my sister and myself at the risk of your own, when the ocean steamer went down off the Banks of Newfoundland, and my poor father and mother were drowned."

"Och, murther! yis, I know what it is when there is a ruction at say," said Mike Carroll. "It's jist the worrust thing yez iver saw, so it is!"

"I never saw the children before that awful night. They were cabin passengers and I was traveling from Paris to New York by steerage. So I never knew who their parents were," went on the Demon Doctor, simply.

"Professor Le Fevre," said Mr. Golden, taking the Demon Doctor's hand. "You saved my life last night and added one more to the many debts of gratitude I owe you. We have long been close friends, and now, I am sure, we shall be brothers. Strange that I never should have chanced to inquire the name of your daughter before. It might have sooner led to her recovery."

"But my sister, Mabel, father. How is it I have never seen her, or even heard you speak of her?" said Lucette.

The Demon Doctor looked troubled.

"I do not know," he said, sadly. "We landed in New York, and I had you both in my care, with the intention of bringing you up as my own."

"Yes," said Mr. Golden, eagerly.

"I left the two little ones in a hotel in New York while I went out to make arrangements for our journey to Pittsburg, where I intended to settle down. When I returned, Lucette was there, but Mabel was gone. No one in the hotel could tell me anything about it. The children had been left in the care of a chambermaid, who had allowed them to play about the halls. Mabel had disappeared. That was all she knew, and that is all I have been able to find out from that day to this. In a small leather bag tied around the neck of Lucette, were a quantity of jewels—diamonds. I found the bag when we landed in New York, and I saved it carefully for the children. A week ago the bag was stolen, I believe by Barney Driver."

"They were," broke in Clara, with a sob. "Barney had them in the mine, I know."

"Then they are lost, irretrievably, I am afraid," said the Demon Doctor. "Nothing can have been saved in that part of the mine after such a terrible explosion."

"Where is Deadhold?" asked Lucette. "I have not seen him this morning."

"I don't know," said her father, as we shall still continue to call the Demon Doctor.

"An' who bees Deadhould?" asked Mike Carroll. "Sure that's a new wan on me."

"I believe you know him as Frank Trenton," returned the Demon Doctor. "But Barney Driver spoke of him as Deadhold, and the name seemed so appropriate that I have used it since. He is a bright young man, though he does not seem to have more strength than Lucette there."

"He's a funny boy. I took a great fancy to him," said Lawrence Sinclair, speaking for the first time. He had been so intent in watching Lucette and in listening to the story of her early life and antecedents that he had felt no wish to talk himself.

"I'll go and look for him," said the Demon Doctor. "He must be somewhere in the house I should think."

"I don't think so," said Clara. "Look in the mine."

The girl spoke so confidently, as if she knew that the boy would be there, that the Demon Doctor, with a motion to Lawrence Sinclair, went out immediately.

It was broad daylight, being about ten o'clock in the morning after the explosion, but was dark in the corridor of the mine.

An electric light shone from the Demon Doctor's breast at his bidding, and made the ruin and disturbance of the interior plain to everybody.

The whole party followed the Demon Doctor as he explored the cavern.

The force of the explosion, while it had not reached to this part of the mine, had still blocked it up so that they could not proceed safely very far.

"What would the b'ye be doin' here, onyhow?" said Mike Carroll. "Sure, he c'u'dn't ixpect to foind onythin' now that all the insoide uv it has gone oop in shmoke an' cinders."

"He is here somewhere," said Clara, quietly.

The girl evidently knew more than she told, for she walked boldly along close by the Demon Doctor, as if she knew that they would find something presently to reward their search.

"What is this under our feet?" asked Mr. Golden.

"It is one of those small recesses or closets where the miners used to keep their tools and working clothing, I expect," said the Demon Doctor, raising a trap. Then, after peering into it, he said: "No; it's an old stable. Come down. It slopes easily. I suppose the pit mules used to pass a good portion of their existence here."

With the Demon Doctor leading and showing a light, all walked down the slope, where the faint smell of hay and straw gave token that it was indeed a stable in the long ago.

"Foony place," commented Mike Carroll.

"There does not seem to be anything down here," said Lawrence Sinclair.

"Howly Moses," burst from Mike, as the little Irishman turned around to run up the slope.

"What's the matter, Mike?" asked Lawrence.

"Ow! Ow! A ghost! A ghost! A white ghost! I seen it, wid me own eyes, begorra!"

He was evidently very much terrified, as he pointed toward a corner of the stable.

At this moment, the "ghost" stepped from behind a heap of lumber and rock, and stood revealed, in the person of a graceful young girl, about the same age as Lucette.

She wore a dark traveling-suit and a jaunty hat, with a veil closely drawn over her face.

The "white" ghost was the result only of Mike Carroll's imagination.

"Do not ask me any questions, Professor Le Fevre," said the stranger, in a musical voice. "But let me go to your house, where perhaps I can give you some information that will interest you."

The Demon Doctor, surprised as he was to find a strange young lady in such a place, and still more surprised that she knew his name, did not make any reply, but stood back to allow her to pass out first, showing her a light as he did so.

A quarter of an hour later all were once more gathered in the Demon Doctor's study, with the addition of the strange young lady, who still wore her hat and veil.

The latter was speaking.

"This girl," she said, "is my friend, and can corroborate me, if necessary," placing her gloved hand on Clara's shoulder.

"I have known her for years," said Clara, simply. "She was stolen from a New York hotel when a baby, by—my mother."

"Your mother?" said the Demon Doctor.

"Yes, but do not speak harshly of her. She is long since dead. Mabel here was my companion until five years ago. Then—then I met Barney, and a year later we were married. Mabel had learned to be a telegraph operator and could always make a good living. A year ago I heard that she had gone into another business—a detective, but I never saw her again until last night."

"Mabel!" exclaimed Lucette, clasping her newly-found sister to her bosom.

"My daughter," said the Demon Doctor.

"Will the young lady let us see her arm?" asked the cashier, with the caution taught by a long career in a bank.

Clara helped Mabel to pull up her sleeve, and there, plainly enough, was a crescent, standing out clearly in the white flesh of her rounded arm.

"Yes, you are undoubtedly my niece," said Mr. Golden. "Henceforth your home is with your old bachelor uncle, is it not?"

"If you wish it," said Mabel, placing her hand trustingly in that of Mr. Golden.

"But let us see your face, my dear," said the old gentleman. "We cannot tell what you look like behind that veil."

Mabel, with a swift movement, drew the veil from her face.

"Deadhold!" exclaimed the Demon Doctor.

"Frank Trenton!" cried Lawrence Sinclair and Mike Carroll.

To say that the speakers were astonished would convey but a faint idea of their intense wonderment.

The young lady, whom we must now call Mabel Golden, who has hitherto been known to us as Frank Trenton and Deadhold, smiled, as she explained that, having just been engaged as a female detective, she had found it easier to follow up her chosen profession as a boy, and, as Frank Trenton, or Deadhold, she had often been enabled to do good detective work that she could never have accomplished as a young lady.

What more is there to tell?

Mabel is happy as she can be with her indulgent old uncle, at his beautiful home on the Ohio, and Clara, who lives there too, as her companion, is developing roses on her cheeks such as she never had as the wife of Barney the Blacksheep.

Lawrence Sinclair and Lucette have obtained the consent of the Demon Doctor and Mr. Golden to their marriage, and hope soon to become one, the old gentleman having already given Lawrence a lucrative position in the bank, for which he has developed a singular aptitude.

In the old house on Mount Washington, within view of the entrance to the old worked-out mine, a tall, white-haired man pursues in quietude his scientific studies. He is day by day bringing more under control the mystic forces of electricity, and is at work on an invention, now nearly completed, which will make, it is expected, the whole world ring with the name of Prof. Le Fevre, known to his neighbors as The Demon Doctor.

THE END.

NEWS OF TODAY

The girl with a $250 hat who was refused admission to a Chicago university promptly tossed her costly headgear into the litigation ring.

* * * * *

The girls of Wellesley, 1,500 of them, are gathering a mile of pennies. To revise the old axiom, 1,500 misses should be as good as a mile.

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The sporting editor of the "Congressional Record" will find his job much easier now that Dr. Wiley has resigned from the Department of Agriculture.

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"Mr. Morgan calls on king," says a head line. The nerve of the man! One could raise on a hand like that, but to call seems to be the height of folly.

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A New York library has included "African Game Trails" on its list of "popular fiction." This seems almost like jumping on a man when he's down.

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It is officially announced that molasses is a good road maker. But the good roads bureau doesn't claim it will sweeten up life's journey to any sentimental extent.

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The loan sharks complain that the present campaign against them is a conspiracy in restraint of trade. No man sentenced to be hanged ever believed in capital punishment.

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Raymond Duncan, the gentleman who wears Greek garb, says that "all men ought to strike for a fortnight every year in order to learn a new trade." Raymond ought to take a week or two off to learn tailoring.

Jersey justice is adequate to all ordinary emergencies, and when a resident of Hasbrouck Heights complained to the mayor that a neighbor's rooster, which was an enthusiastic vocalist, made sleep impossible, the head of the municipality appointed the coroner a committee of one to sit up all night and see if the indictment against the bird had been overdrawn. The logic of the complainant was irrefragible. No rooster had a right, he urged, to make him a neurasthenic, or to keep up a frantic cock-a-doodling for which a man would be promptly arrested for disorderly conduct.

* * * * *

Age may hamper men who weakly accept the paralyzing race tradition that the only place for four score years is a sailor's snug harbor, an almshouse or a chimney corner. But age is no handicap to a man whose heart is young and whose sanguine confidence in himself is unabated; the years bring him only a mature mellowness which more than offsets the fever and fire of youth. In London, the other day, a sprightly old fellow by the name of James was denounced as a scoundrel and sentenced to a year's imprisonment for defrauding a widow whom he had airily promised to marry. When James gets out of duress he will be 94 years old, and with a prison record against him may find the outlook a little discouraging. But who can believe that he will lie down supinely. A man who can deceive a widow at 93 can sell mining stocks at 94; there is no dead line for such a man, and a judge less harsh and cold might have found some kindlier word than scoundrel for this alert nonagenarian with his youthful heart and his enticing ways. Not that villainy should be condoned, but self-reliant old age should be encouraged. How much would the world lose if Mr. Carnegie should hole himself up in his palace with its gold-legged chairs and consider himself old and out by age, instead of interesting himself in everything that happens and keeping an observant weather eye open for handsome girls.

Jeff Clayton's Lost Clue

BY WILLIAM WARD

(A SERIAL STORY)

CHAPTER IV.—Continued.

Morford shot a shrewd, questioning glance at him this time.

"I thank you very much for your very frank statement of conditions, Mr. Morford," announced the operator's caller, rising. "I shall be guided wholly by your advice and will let cotton alone for the present."

"When Consolidated rallies, come in again, Mr. Taylor. I may be able to serve you in a more material way then."

"I will, thank you. Depend upon it, I shall take you at your word. When conditions clear up, you certainly shall see me again," answered the detective in a tone the significance of which the broker caught a note that caused him to flash another shrewd glance at his caller. "I bid you good day. The Senator asked me to extend his kindest regards to you."

Morford thawed instantly and extended his hand to his caller, after which Jefferson Clayton, world-famous detective, passed out through the private exit into the hall.

As he did so, he observed a man entering the main office of the suite. At first Clayton gave him only a quick, passing glance. Instantly he turned and surveyed the other's back as the man disappeared in the office, closing the door behind him.

"Hello! Now, who is that fellow? He don't look the way he did when last I saw him, but I know him. Ah! I have it. He's Jolly Dixon, confidence man. He's a fellow who travels on the Atlantic liners, fleecing the unwary. He had a beard the last time I saw him—a beautiful, glossy Van Dyke. What can he be doing here? I must find out. Perhaps I have fallen in luck."

Casting a swift glance up and down the hall, and finding that he was unobserved, Jeff Clayton slipped into an open doorway, that he had observed adjoining the private office of the big cotton operator. There was only a crack to indicate that the door was not closed tightly, but the detective espied it. He remembered a door on that side of the broker's private office, but whether it led into this particular room or not, he had not the least idea. The chance was worth taking, and Jeff Clayton took it without the slightest hesitation.

Stepping softly into the room, a quick glance told him that the place was unoccupied. Moving a little further in and pulling the door softly to behind him, he found himself looking directly into the private office of George Morford, which he had left only a few moments before.

But, from his position he could neither hear nor see. With movements so quick that one would have been at a loss to understand their meaning, the detective turned his coat, crushing his Fedora hat down roughly on his head, then moved noiselessly to a point to the left of the door leading into the private office.

There was not the slightest sound there. The office appeared to be empty.

"I guess I'm in wrong," muttered Clayton, preparing to peer in. "I'm sure——"

The sentence was not completed. A hand was laid violently on the detective's shoulder, and before he could offer any resistance, he was hurled flat on his face on the floor in the middle of the room.

"I—I ain't done nothin'," he muttered in a muffled voice, as he turned to George Morford a wrinkled, horrible face, which, with the furtive glances of the eyes, betrayed him as a man who had lost out in his battle with the world, and who depended wholly on the charity of that same world to support him. In other words, it was the face of a beggar, hopeless from dissipation and scant nourishment.

CHAPTER V.

OUTWITTED BY AN OLD RUSE.

"Get up!" commanded George Morford.

The detective struggled to his feet with well-feigned difficulty, and stood cringing before his captor. Morford had stepped across the office—which Clayton had entered a moment after—to the lavatory, and, returning, had discovered the eavesdropper peering into his office.

"Well, sir, who are you?"

"Please, sir, I'm a poor unfortunate——"

"You're a thief, that's what you are. What do you mean by sneaking into my offices—what were you peering in at that door for, and how did you get in here?" snapped the broker in a series of short, explosive sentences.

"I—I found the door open, and—and I came in."

"Yes, I see you did," retorted Mr. Morford, drily. "But what for?"

"I though mebby you'd help a fellow in distress. I—I was as well dressed as you once."

"Hey, Dixon!"

There was a movement in the private office at the summons and the detective's eyes reflected a momentary twinkle as Jolly Dixon, confidence man and all-around crook, responded. He was in the room almost before the cotton operator's words were out of his mouth.

"What is it?"

"I should like you to take a look at this fellow. I found him puttering around in here and trying to listen or peek into the other office. Ever see him before?"

Jolly Dixon stooped, peering suspiciously into the face of the world-famous detective. There was no sign of recognition in the face of the confidence man. Nor was there anything familiar in the face of the man he was staring at.

"Come over here so I can get a better look at you, fellow!" he commanded, jerking Jeff violently to the window. "No, never saw him before in my life. Shall I kick him out? He's just a common beggar."

"Very well, give him a good swift kick that will land him clear to the elevator or the sub-cellar, I don't care," answered Morford, his interest apparently having died out, now that he was assured the stranger was none other than what he represented himself to be.

Jolly Dixon complied with the broker's request to the best of his ability, and Jeff Clayton confessed that it hurt. But the detective did not make the mistake of assuming his natural bearing at once. Instead, he limped down the hall, turned a corner and passed clear around to the other side of the building before he paused. Then, he deftly turned his coat, straightened out the crumpled Fedora hat, and brushed a hand across his face. From the wrecked specimen of a few moments before emerged the world-famous detective, Jeff Clayton.

"Jolly Dixon, you'll pay for that kick, with compound interest," growled the detective, rubbing his anatomy gingerly. "I don't know what you're doing around here, but I'll gamble that you're up to some crooked business. And, Mr. George Morford, you've given me a line on yourself that I am almighty glad to get."

Clayton descended by another elevator from the one he had come up on, and walked leisurely to the street with a half smile on his face. In front of the building he observed a coupé standing just beyond where his own vehicle was waiting.

"How long has that cab been standing there?" he asked of his driver, a sudden thought occurring to him.

"'Bout ten or fifteen minutes, sir."

"What sort of a looking person came in it?"

His driver told him.

"We'll wait for him to come out," decided Jeff Clayton. Then, to his own driver, "Keep your eyes on the other fellow. When he gets into the cab, I want you to follow him without his getting wise to the fact. Understand?"

"Yes," grinned the driver of the taxicab. "You needn't worry about that cab's getting away from me. I could follow it with my eyes shut."

The detective stepped into a cigar stand nearby, and, lighting up, awaited the moment when the man he was interested in should emerge from the building. After half an hour of waiting his patience was rewarded. Jolly Dixon walked briskly from the Broad street building, and entering his coupé, slammed the door after a brief word to the driver.

Jefferson Clayton waited until the coupé had gotten under way, whereupon he ran to his taxi and sprang in.

"All right," he said.

The driver, who had cranked up beforehand, in order to be in readiness, quickly threw in the clutch and the car moved away.

"Don't get too close to him," warned the detective.

"I won't. Don't worry. Are you an officer?"

"Yes. I'm Jefferson Clayton, for your own private ear, however."

"Oh!" exclaimed the driver. He could scarcely resist the temptation to look around at his famous passenger, but he knew that were he to do so he would run a good chance of either killing a pedestrian or colliding with some other vehicle in the crowded street. "I thought you must be one of the big fly cops."

"I don't call myself a cop, my dear fellow, and if you're wise, you will be careful what you say. There are people around us all the time here, even though we are moving. He seems to be in a hurry about something."

The detective peered carelessly at the coupé ahead, which, it seemed to him, was driving at a reckless rate of speed, and he was in momentary expectation of seeing the driver of the team held up for violation of the speed ordinance. Yet nothing of the sort occurred. The detective's taxicab was open, the cover having been folded back, so that Jeff was given an unobstructed view of all that was going on about him, and which he took advantage of to the fullest extent.

Both vehicles had started up Broadway. At Washington Place the coupé turned to the left and headed for the Square.

"Going up Fifth avenue," announced the detective.

"Yes," answered the driver. "Can make better time there. But he can't drive fast enough to get away from the taxi," the fellow grinned. Jeff knew that he was grinning, because the grin extended clear back to his ears.

Nothing of moment occurred until they had reached Forty-second street and Fifth avenue. Here, as luck would have it, the coupé slipped over the cross street, which it had barely cleared, when the policeman's whistle signalled traffic on the downtown side of Forty-second street to hold up.

The detective's driver threw on the brakes and came to a short stop.

"Go on! go on!" commanded Clayton.

"I don't dare. I'll be arrested."

"Go on, I tell you. I'll take the risk."

(To be continued.)

TABLOIDS OF NEWS

Charles Hann, jr., of the 1911 class at Harvard university, has presented a silver cup to be given the member of the varsity nine who shows the most alertness this season. The cup will be awarded on points for reaching first base, sacrifice hits, stolen bases and runs scored.

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Miss Anna Hanson, of Tacoma, has broken the world's record for women in target shooting when she made 48 out of a possible 50 on a twenty-yard indoor range with standard targets. Only one shot went out of the bull's-eye and then by a scant fraction of an inch. The record was made with a revolver.

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In order to escape a send-off by their friends, Mr. and Mrs. Rae E. Cross, of Ithaca, N. Y., locked the 150 guests at their wedding in the attic of the house and escaped by automobile. The guests were not liberated until a half hour later, when a Cornell student made a rope of some bunting and slid down three stories to the ground and then opened the attic door. By that time the newly-married couple had made a clean getaway.

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Warned by the dangers with which the United States was threatened by cholera in Southern Europe last year, Surgeon-General Blue, of the public health service, has began preparing a vigorous campaign to protect this country against the disease through immigrants in case of an outbreak this year. European countries will be asked to subject immigrants to America to a rigid medical examination. It will be suggested that they adopt the bacteriological test which is regarded as a sure means of detecing cholera bacillus. The number of American medical inspectors abroad will be materially increased.

Holland is a small country, but it is one of the most prosperous nations on the globe. The Dutch are frugal, forehanded, and good business people. They always have money to lend on approved security over and above what they need for their own country and the development of their own colonies. Holland is a wealthy country without great individual fortune. She has only 568 millionaires, and of these but 136 could qualify as millionaires under the American dollar standard. There are only forty-seven persons in all Holland whose income approaches $40,000 a year, and 1,358 that receive between $4,000 and $8,000 annually. This is an ideal condition. The people have no feverish craze for riches. They do not care to live beyond their own station in life. They are honest, simple, hard-working, frugal. They have had to fight a great and cruel foe for their very existence. And they have conquered. They have driven back the sea and harnessed the winds of heaven. A wonderful people!

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A new opera entitled "Paolo and Francesca," by the Hungarian composer, Emil Abryani, was recently produced for the first time at the Budapest Royal Opera. The novelty scored an emphatic success. The libretto, based on the "Comedia Divina," is said to be interesting, full of life, color, contrast and dramatic moments. The music is written along broad, melodic lines in the lyric parts, while the dramatic episodes are characterized by pregnant effects in the Wagnerian style. The critics praised quite particularly the composer's originality in producing rhythmic variety, his warm temperament and his esprit. They prophesy that he could make a great name, if he were to devote himself to setting to music librettos that deal with more lyrical and comical subjects. The part of Francesca was sung by Anna Medek, the star of the Budapest Opera, with great warmth of expression and with rare insight into the dramatic possibilities of the rôle. Dr. Szekelyhidy as Paolo had a splendid opportunity to display the beauties of his remarkable tenor voice, and histrionically he was also interesting. The third principal rôle, that of Giancotte, found an admirable interpreter in every respect in Rosza, a singer of great individuality and temperament. "Paolo and Francesca" is interesting because the libretto and music were written by father and son respectively.

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Switzerland's methods of caring for the unemployed are described by R. E. Mansfield, consul-general at Zurich, in a recent issue of the "Consular and Trade Reports." "The Swiss," he says, "act upon the theory that a man who is unemployed is, if left to himself, prone to become unemployable. . . . The purpose is to assist the unemployed to secure work, not only for the sake of the individual, but also in the interests of the state. . . . No toleration is shown to the loafer, begging is prohibited by law, and vagrancy is classified as a crime." If the individual does not make a serious effort to find work, it is found for him. Once he has been given an opportunity to earn his living, he is compelled to take advantage of it, with the alternative of going to the workhouse, where military discipline is enforced. A fund is maintained by each canton, out of which the needy unemployed are assisted, in some cities, notably Berne, Basel and Geneva, the government subsidizes associations, union or otherwise, which have employment insurance funds. In all benefits of this kind unemployment caused by strikes or lockouts resulting from strikes is not recognized. In March, 1910, municipal employment agencies, which had been established in several Swiss cities as early as 1900, were united into a national organization, subsidized by the federal government to the extent of one-third of the sum expended in maintenance. Their wide usefulness as a clearing house for the work market may be seen from the fact that in 1910 the twelve cities of Arau, Basel, Berne, Bienne, Friburg, Geneva, Lausanne, Rorschach, Shaffhausen, St. Gall, Winterthur, and Zurich filled 46,520 positions out of 68,917 offered. Swiss methods, as Consul Mansfield says, are "worthy of emulation by countries where the question constitutes a more serious problem than in the Confederation."

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Recently a unique train departed from Brownsville, Tex., for a four months' trip over the 'Frisco system. This is the "Good Roads Special" to be operated by the 'Frisco Railway company, the office of public roads of the United States department of agriculture, and the American Association for Highway Improvement. It is a train of four cars, especially equipped, and carries lecturers and an unusual exhibit. This exhibit consists of carefully prepared models of all types of road construction from sand-clay and gravel to bituminous macadam, and of reinforced concrete bridges and culverts, completed and under construction. It also contains miniature models of road machinery and a rock quarry, which are operated by electricity. Each model in the car is properly labelled so that the object-lesson in itself affords a considerable road education. The equipment of this train even surpasses that of the four similar "Good Roads" trains recently operated over other railway systems in the United States. This train will cover about 15,000 miles in the states of Texas, Louisiana, Missouri, Kansas, Arkansas, Oklahomo, Mississippi and Alabama. A complete schedule of stops has been prepared which provides opportunity for more than three hundred lectures upon good roads topics. These lectures will be given upon those road subjects which are mostly intimately connected with the locality visited. H. C. Wells, superintendent of Road construction, assisted by J. W. Janssen, both of the United States Office of Public Roads, will accompany the train to give good roads lectures. Their addresses will be illustrated by more than one hundred colored lantern slides. The representative of the American Association of Highway Improvement will effect good roads organizations where there is a desire to have them. These men are expert highway engineers and are prepared and willing to answer all questions which time permits at each stop.

THROUGH FIRE AND WATER

A Tale of Thrilling Adventure in London

By WILSON CHANNING

(A SERIAL STORY)

CHAPTER II.—Continued.

"A blow-pipe, of course. Depend upon it, they're all ready for the last attack. They've dug through everything but the steel plates. Now they're waiting for something or other."

"Morovitch's hanging," suggested Bob, and Tom thought it quite likely.

"I wonder if there's any way out of this beastly pest-house besides the door?" murmured Tom. "I seem to feel a draught of air coming from somewhere. Perhaps there's a grating!"

The darkness was so thick they could almost feel it choking them. But a few minutes of stealthy reconnoitering, proved that Tom's surmise was correct. Hoisted up on Bob's sturdy shoulders, he soon found his fingers clutching iron bars.

They were socketed in stone, but some of them were so eaten with rust at the base that they could almost be rattled.

One extra violent wrench sent something pattering down on Bob's shoulders.

It was a fragment of stone, grown rotten with damp. Another heave and a grunt, and the bar actually came away in Tom Chase's hands. He could scarcely believe his luck. It made an excellent lever, too.

Other rusty bars quickly succumbed, and a few seconds later Tom was scrambling through the opening. To enable Bob to climb after him was a more difficult problem.

But the fireman only needed a grip of his leg for a moment. The next he had sprung at the remaining bars and swung himself up.

Now where were they? A fresh wind and the shrill whistle of a steam-tug close at hand, showed them that they must be near the river.

Groping their way forward, their hands encountered a wooden double door, heavily bared and padlocked. It must be the one through which they had first entered.

Tom still had his crow-bar, but to attempt to burst the fastenings with that would certainly bring the enemy down on them with a rush.

Such a desperate crew would have eyes and ears for ever open for any suspicious sound. They must go in hourly dread of discovery by the police.

Tom was wondering whether it would not be better to scale this barrier, when suddenly from behind them sounded a muffled howl of rage.

They spun round, catching at their breath in dismay. Their escape had been discovered. Lights were flickering under the grating through which they had just wriggled.

They could hear the men cursing and snarling like beasts, fighting to get out and pursue them.

"Quick, they're after us. Go for it!" gasped Bob, groping round for something which would serve as a weapon.

There was no need to keep silence now. Tom jammed his iron bar into the hasp of the padlock, and flung all his weight on to it. Something gave suddenly, and flung him to the ground.

It was the rust-eaten bar that had snapped. Nevertheless, Bob had snatched what was left out of Tom's hands almost as he fell. He heard another crack and crunch.

Thank Heaven, the wood was giving way!

But already they heard the scuffle of feet close to them. There was no howling now. Their pursuers were closing on them with a silent rush.

Bob, meantime, was tugging and rending away like one possessed. Open flew the door at last, hurling him back into the arms of the foremost of the pursuers.

But Tom had seen the danger. In the dim light now streaming through, he saw a masked face and eyeballs glaring. The man's arms were outstretched to clutch his chum, when Tom brought his right fist round with a swing, crash on the angle of the jaw.

The man collapsed with a groan, tripping two others, who were at his heels. Yet none of them uttered a cry. They floundered, and clutched and clawed like dumb things.

The two firemen were out by this time, however, and running like the wind. They found themselves in the narrow cobbled lane through which they had been conducted an hour ago.

They did not take the turning which they knew led through a maze of slums, but kept straight on, for they could see a broad space and lights ahead.

And then, too late, they realized that they had walked into another trap. The cobbled lane had suddenly ended and they found themselves at the edge of a muddy quay.

It was the river. Beneath them lay a strip of muddy foreshore, hemmed in by jutting walls on either side; beyond that, the lapping tide, splashed here and there with lights of craft at anchor. A guttural cry of triumph sounded from behind.

"Can you swim?" panted Tom desperately.

"Yes."

"Come on, then!"

Without a pause both leaped. They landed, plunging almost knee-deep. Then forward they floundered.

It was like a nightmare, that mad scramble, with the tenacious mud sucking them down as if striving to engulf them.

CHAPTER III.

SAILORS TO THE RESCUE—A GREAT CAPTURE.

Every moment they expected—they knew not what! A volley of bullets, perhaps, beween their shoulder-blades.

One or two venturesome pursuers had already plunged down after them, dragging their limbs in pursuit.

But it was not these they minded so much. A little higher up they heard the scrunch of a boat being launched over shingle.

"Now for it!"

The water was already about their knees. Tom and Bob flung themselves forward and struck out. Both proved to be strong swimmers, as well they needed to be.

"Down stream! Keep close to me!" panted Tom. They swam parallel to the shore, searching eagerly for some landing-place, or any shadow in which they could hide.

Behind them in hot pursuit came the boat. Fortunately, the gang were no rowers. They could hear the oars splashing the water like flails, and the men cursing each other's clumsiness under their breath.

"Here, Bob—here!"

Tom had spotted some weed-grown snags, the relics of an old landing-stage, and they struck in behind these and clung on, sinking low so that only their chins were above water.

A moment later the boat zig-zagged past them, swaying from side to side; for it had no rudder.

So far, so good. But they were not out of their troubles yet, for suddenly the boat turned and headed back straight for their hiding-place.

To scramble to shore was impossible. They must seek another shelter.

A hundred yards out in the stream was a small craft at anchor, with a riding-light twinkling on a stumpy mast.

The only thing to do was to make for this. So sliding into the water again, they struck out, athwart the tide, swimming as silently as they could.

The boat for which they were making puzzled them a good deal. It was a long, gray ship's boat, with a sail spread over it as if for a tent. But there was no light on board other than the lantern on the mast.

At last, with a gasp, Bob laid hold of the stem, and Tom made a clutch at his legs.

A strong tide was running, and the ripple caused by their bodies sounded to them like the roar of Niagara, but no one came on deck to see what caused it.

Apparently the mysterious craft was deserted. Still, they must make the best of it.

Meantime, their pursuers, having hunted through the old piles, now came see-sawing out into the stream again in search of them.

The two chums had just made up their minds that they must let go and make another desperate swim for it, when a thump on the timbers close to Tom's head, told him that the craft was not deserted, after all.

Hope sprang afresh in their chilled bodies. Evidently the splashing of oars had been heard, and someone was tumbling out from under the sail cover to see what it meant.

They could just make out the fellow's shape against the night sky as he stood staring suspiciously at the boat drifting by.

For the rowers, seeing him, had promptly rested on their oars, gabbling under their breaths.

"Ahoy, there!" hailed the man at last, in a resolute voice. "What the thunder do you want messing round us at this time of night—eh? Sheer off, or we'll jolly soon make you!"

Immediately there was more scuffling and bumping, and three or four other heads were popped over the gunwhale.

"What's up, Dicky? Who are you shouting at?" asked one.

"Why, that pack of moldy water-rats over there. I caught them sneaking up alongside to see what they could pinch of ours, no doubt," answered the first.

"The brutes! I wish they had. We'd have had their old tub over in two ticks," laughed the other. "How's the tide running, by the way? We ought to be getting under way again soon."

The speaker came scrambling forward then to see what mass of rubbish was this that seemed to have got foul of their anchor-chain.

To Tom's amazement, he saw that he was dressed in bluejacket's uniform. Discovery was now inevitable, of course. At the first glance over the side the sailor caught the loom of the two white faces staring up at him.

"Well, I'm jiggered!" he blurted indignantly, and in another moment would have been whooping loud enough to be heard a mile away.

(To be continued.)

The News World in Paragraphs

It must be admitted that the palm for blood-thirsty daring belongs to those French motorcar bandits.

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New York is about to produce a play that was too bad for London. If it can be expurgated, Paris may see it, ere long!

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The French are an accommodating people. An aviator carried two of them nearly 7,000 feet from earth to try his biplane.

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The tariff board's report on cotton is another thing that must make the ordinary Republican decide to go south for the winter.

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The Arizona legislature votes the recall back into the constitution and will now be added to the states loyal to the rough rider.

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There are rumors that Spain intends to annex Portugal. One would think the poor old land had enough troubles of its own.

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The leading suffraget of China is Yik Yug Ying. She sounds like a cross between a college yell and a tabloid dose of puppy talk.

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They are having an epidemic of spelling bees out in Washington. It was thought they would soon tire of those frequent recalls.

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Gallantry is infectious. Michigan now proposes to give women the ballot.. There is, however, many a slip between the proposal and the act itself.

The news that Elbert Hubbard favors Taft may be a sad blow to the president's campaign, but it is believed he still retains strength in other districts.

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Certain English papers are now pointing out that Premier Asquith receives an immense salary; but none of them are brave enough to claim that he isn't earning it.

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New York cabmen have asked the protection of the police during the early morning hours. But they fail to say whether they fear indignant patrons or East Side thugs.

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A fashion writer exclaims, "Happy is the woman who makes her own hats." Perhaps so. But her husband, not being a connoisseur, might not know whether to be proud or ashamed.

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The Kentuckian accused of singing too loudly in church, sang the same hymns in jail and was acquitted. But a voice that is just right for a jail solo may be altogether too loud for a church chorus.

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Lady Warwick intimates that Americans have something like 10,000 words in their vocabularies. But then, she had been dealing almost exclusively with women. The ordinary American man can't handle more than 1,500 to advantage.

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The suggestion that coal can be consumed in the mines, supplying energy to great dynamos and furnishing power to wide areas, sounds dubious, but Sir William Ramsey says it can be done. And the layman who undertakes to contradict Sir William along scientific lines is wasting his breath.

OLD SLEUTH WEEKLY

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Comment on Current Events

An Italian historian, Gugliolmo Ferrero, says that when an ancient Roman citizen wanted a divorce, he had only to write a letter to his wife. It is much simpler in these days, however. All a person has to do is to leave a letter from an affinity in his coat pocket.

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When Andrew Carnegie singled out a Pittsburgh girl and indorsed her as the most beautiful in the world he doubtless acted with the kindliest of intentions. Yet he did the girl a real injury. He should have been more thoughtful. Of course, the inevitable has happened. The girl is fairly engulfed in an avalanche of marriage proposals. Photographers camp on her trail. The peace and quiet of her life have departed. She will have far more than ordinary character and resistance if she does not try to capitalize the notoriety thrust upon her. She seems a very modest, ladylike creature, too. Insisting she is not as pretty as Carnegie says, she declares she will marry no one she does not love. Good for Virginia Lee. One hopes she remains true to these beliefs, in spite of the publicity thoughtlessly thrust upon her.

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Perhaps the petition of numerous French mothers, recently laid before the French senate, is added proof of the trend of things; perhaps it isn't. Anyway, these petitioning French mothers want a Legion of Honor for themselves. It is not to be awarded for deeds of daring, for patriotic devotion on the battlefield, for mere proofs of valor. What the mothers ask is a medal corresponding to the military medal that denotes the highest form of fidelity to the republic, and they ask it for each mother of eight children. The French mother who brings up eight children, according to the petition, should be entitled to a badge of courage and a government pension. The senator who offered the petition is inclined to favor it, but is puzzled to find a suitable name for the new legion. This man is chairman of the committee commissioned by the senate to report upon the matter, and he finds it highly interesting. He approves not only of the new legion, but of the pension system that the petition suggests. According to the latter, each French mother would receive 20 francs a year per child. "We commend the moderation of these French mothers," the senator said, and he has shown his approval by proposing the plan to the ministry of the interior. Whatever may be the action of the interior department with regard to the petition, there can be no denial that the French mother of eight sons and daughters is quite as worthy of official recognition and reward as the Frenchman who charges a battery, or stands up and lets an enemy shoot at him.

SMILES AND SNICKERS

"So you are going to marry Miss Clever?"

"No. She's far too up-to-date for my simple taste."

"How is that?"

"Why, I wrote to her last Monday to say I was coming down to propose, and when I arrived I found she had sold the rights of photographing my proposal to a moving picture firm."

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"You!" exclaimed an indignant old gentleman; "you want to marry my daughter? Why, sir, it is only a few years ago that you were caddying for me!"

"Yes," the young man replied, "but I don't intend to let that stand in the way. I hope I am philosopher enough to understand that a very bad golfer may make a fairly good father-in-law!"

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A good story is going the rounds at a certain university regarding one of the sarcastic professors, who was recently conducting an oral examination in a very scientific study.

There was one student, handsome, easy, and self-possessed, who appeared to be utterly ignorant of the simplest phases of the subject.

Professor W. put question after question to him, without receiving one intelligent reply. Finally, the student said, naïvely:

"I'm very unfortunate, Professor; you never ask me anything I know."

The professor said nothing, but gravely tore off a tiny piece of paper from a convenient pad.

"Here, Mr. B.," he said, handing it to the student, "write all you know. Take plenty of time—there's no hurry."

BOMBARDMENT OF BEIRUT

The following is the account by an eye witness of the recent bombardment of Beirut by the Italian fleet, in the war with Turkey.

"On Saturday morning, February 24th, I saw two battleships lying off the port which proved to be a part of the Italian fleet. We knew at once that something warlike was brewing, but we had no information of their intentions.

"It appears that about 7 o'clock the admiral had communicated with the governor that the two Turkish warships in the harbor, one a torpedo boat and the other a coast guard ship, must be delivered to him by 9 o'clock or he would be obliged to destroy them. I had a class in the college at Beirut where I am teaching from 8 to 9 and had just finished and gone up to the library when I was startled by the report of heavy firing. I looked down to the bay and saw the flashes of the big guns of the battleships firing into the harbor and I realized at once that the destruction of the boats in the harbor was determined upon. The firing was pretty rapid for a time and one or two shots were sent clean over the city, falling on the sands where the golf links are. What the object of these was we do not know, as they would not be likely to hurt anybody, but we surmised it was to warn the garrison at the barracks who were firing at the ships that they would be liable to punishment if they kept it up.

"These shots passed over our part of the town and a lady acquaintance, who was on the housetop, saw the cloud of sand they kicked up. At the college the concussion was severe enough to make the main building tremble, which is a very substantial structure. You may be sure that no classes could be carried on after the action began, the students all rushing out to see what was going on. The scene in the town was indescribable. People were fleeing in all directions. The barracks were besieged by a mob of Moslems, demanding arms to defend themselves from the attack of Italian troops, which they fully expected, and hundreds of irresponsible persons got rifles and ammunition.

"There was, of course, no danger from any landing force, for the battleships did not have men enough to carry out any such project and their sole intention was to destroy the gunboats, but the mass of the people in the city, having heard terrible stories of the doings of the Italians in Tripoli, were possessed with the idea that similar scenes would be enacted in Beirut. We, of course, knew better, but there was a real danger that the mob of Moslems with arms in their hands might fall upon the Christians in revenge for the attack upon the harbor and the killing of marines and others, who were in that part of the town, and there was some indiscriminate shooting.

"The government soldiers were, however, distributed about the city to prevent rioting, and they succeeded pretty well. After practically destroying the two boats in the harbor, with considerable accidental damage to the custom-house and neighboring buildings, the Italians drew off toward the north, and we thought the action was over, but some time afternoon they returned, and one of the battleships drew up in front of the opening to the port and sent two or three torpedoes against the disabled ships, completing their destruction. The explosion of these torpedoes did considerable damage to the neighboring buildings, the Ottoman bank among them. I was down there this morning (February 26th) and saw some ugly holes bored through the walls, but it is not wrecked so as to prevent business being resumed, and the walls are not so damaged as to be unsafe. They can easily be repaired. It was not the intention of the Italians to injure any of the buildings, but it could not be helped, they were in such close proximity to the port. The killed and wounded were struck by fragments of shells, which were pretty thickly strewed about the region of the custom-house.

"How many were killed we do not yet know, but the fatalities will probably amount to more than 100, and the wounded probably to many more. Three of the latter were brought to our hospital, two of whom have died. Hundreds of people fled to the mountains, and a number of families took refuge in the college grounds and were housed for the night. Dr. Bliss sheltered some Moslem women in his own house, and many were given places in the various college buildings. They felt that under our flag they would be safe from the savage Italians. We knew, of course, that there was no danger for them in their homes, but as it was a comfort to them to feel that they were protected the president permitted them to spend the night there. On Sunday, as the Italians did not reappear, they regained confidence and returned to their homes, and everything is quiet to-day.

"The city is under martial law, which is well, considering the thousand of fanatical people who have arms in their possession. The government authorities are collecting the rifles taken from the barracks, but it is doubtful whether they will be able to recover them all for some days. Altogether it has been an exciting time, and has reminded me of the '60s, when we saw such times at home. We hope peace will soon be declared, and that the excitement of this excitable people will be allayed."

"I hear that Splasher has been wonderfully successful with his pictures lately."

"How many has he sold?"

"One."

"Only one. Do you call that wonderful?"

"Yes, rather. I've seen his pictures."

Latest Facts in Science And Industry

Sunflower seeds make better bait than cheese for the mouse-trap.

* * * * *

Equal parts of milk and luke-warm water are excellent for sponging palms.

* * * * *

A pinch of borax in cooked starch will make the clothes stiffer and whiter.

* * * * *

It is better to wipe off mesh with a wet cloth than to let water run over it.

* * * * *

Dried lemon peel sprinkled over coals will destroy any disagreeable odor in the house.

* * * * *

John D. Crimmins, the late New York banker, was talking at Palm Beach, apropos of a political squabble, about motives.

"Motives are strange things," he said. "Never judge an action without first understanding its motive. Then you won't go wrong.

"Apropos of queer motives," Mr. Crimmins continued, "I'll tell you about a duke. This duke went to a musical comedy one evening, admired the leading lady very much, and sent her, by his valet, a bouquet.

"About a month later, as the duke was lunching, a lady was announced. The duke rose and entered an anteroom and found, to his surprise, the beautiful young actress of the musical comedy of the month before.

"'Oh, your grace,' she said, blushing, 'I have come to thank you for all your beautiful bouquets.'

"'But, madam,' said the duke, 'I think you are mistaken. I only sent you one bouquet—and that was a long time ago.'

"'But your valet—every evening,' she stammered, 'has brought me a bouquet from you!'

"The duke sent for his valet, and the valet admitted that what the actress said was true.

"Now, do you think," said Mr. Crimmins, "that it was love which was the motive of the valet's strange conduct? Oh, no; it was not love. The valet confessed it was a sentiment less noble than love. The nightly bouquet, it seems, only cost the valet 50 cents, and the flattered actress gave him every evening a two-dollar tip."

* * * * *

The following comments and summaries taken from Judge Charbonneau's decision in the Hebert marriage case gives in a nutshell his opinion of the questions at issue:

"The ne temere decree of the Roman Catholic church does not, and cannot, have precedence over the civil law of the province of Quebec."

"This law does not require that the minister performing the ceremony should be of the same faith as the contracting parties in order to make the marriage legal. A Protestant minister is qualified to marry two Catholics."

"Marriage owes its institution to nature, its perfection to law, its holiness to religion."

"What essentially constitutes marriage is the consent of man and woman to unite together for common life; that is not only the basis of the contract, but it is the contract itself. The sacrament gives it solemnity, the civil function gives it publicity, authenticity and civil effect."

"The good faith of the partners, the public possession of the office (held by the clergymen who marry them), and the sanction of the Crown (given in the license to marry) prevent such a contract from being taxed with invalidity."

The judgment excludes from the consideration of Canadian courts not only the ne temere decree, but practically all other ecclesiastical legislation. It abolishes the claim that the sacrament is the essential element of a valid marriage for Roman Catholic adherents. It lays down the principle that the essence of the marriage is

the consent of the parties, and that the sacrament is "simply a form which gives to it its seal of solemnity." The priest or minister officiating does so in two capacities: "When he blesses the marriage he fulfills his religious ministry; when he receives the consent of the parties he gives it authentic form by consigning it to the registers under the authority conferred on him by law. He is exercising purely ministerial functions which have to be granted to him by the civil power."

* * * * *

The reminder that the International waterways treaty between the United Kingdom and the United States became effective on March 1st, and that it is confidently expected to preserve Niagara Falls from spoliation, will be received by the public with a double sense of relief, partly because of the security which is to be afforded to one of the finest, most famous and most cherished natural scenic wonders of the world and partly because of the presumptive cessation of an agitation which, however, laudable in purpose, has long been wearisome. For a score of years Niagara has been supposedly in danger, and for ten or twelve years an animated and persistent campaign has been conducted for its rescue from what has been represented to be peril of total destruction. It will be gratifying to know that that peril has been definitely averted.

The arrangement which has been made appears to be commendable to all but violent extremists. There are perhaps some zealous disciples of Ruskin who would make it a felony for any one to withdraw a single gallon of water from the falls for industrial purposes and would forbid under grievous penalty the maintenance of a factory or a railroad within sight or sound of them. There are also those who would not hesitate to have the falls run dry if it were possible to divert all the flood to money making uses. With neither class can we have sympathy, nor can conventions and laws for the government of Niagara be made for the promotion of their vagaries.

What is to be assured under this treaty and the laws made in consonance with it is that the flow of water over the precipice shall not be perceptibly diminished, and that the majestic spectacle of the falls shall not be debased or marred by the intrusion of nuisances to the eye or barriers to the vision; but that to whatever extent it may be possible without violating those rules the vast industrial potency of the cataract may be utilized. That is a rational settlement, and it will be so well sustained by public sentiment as to assure its faithful execution.

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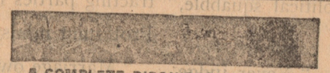

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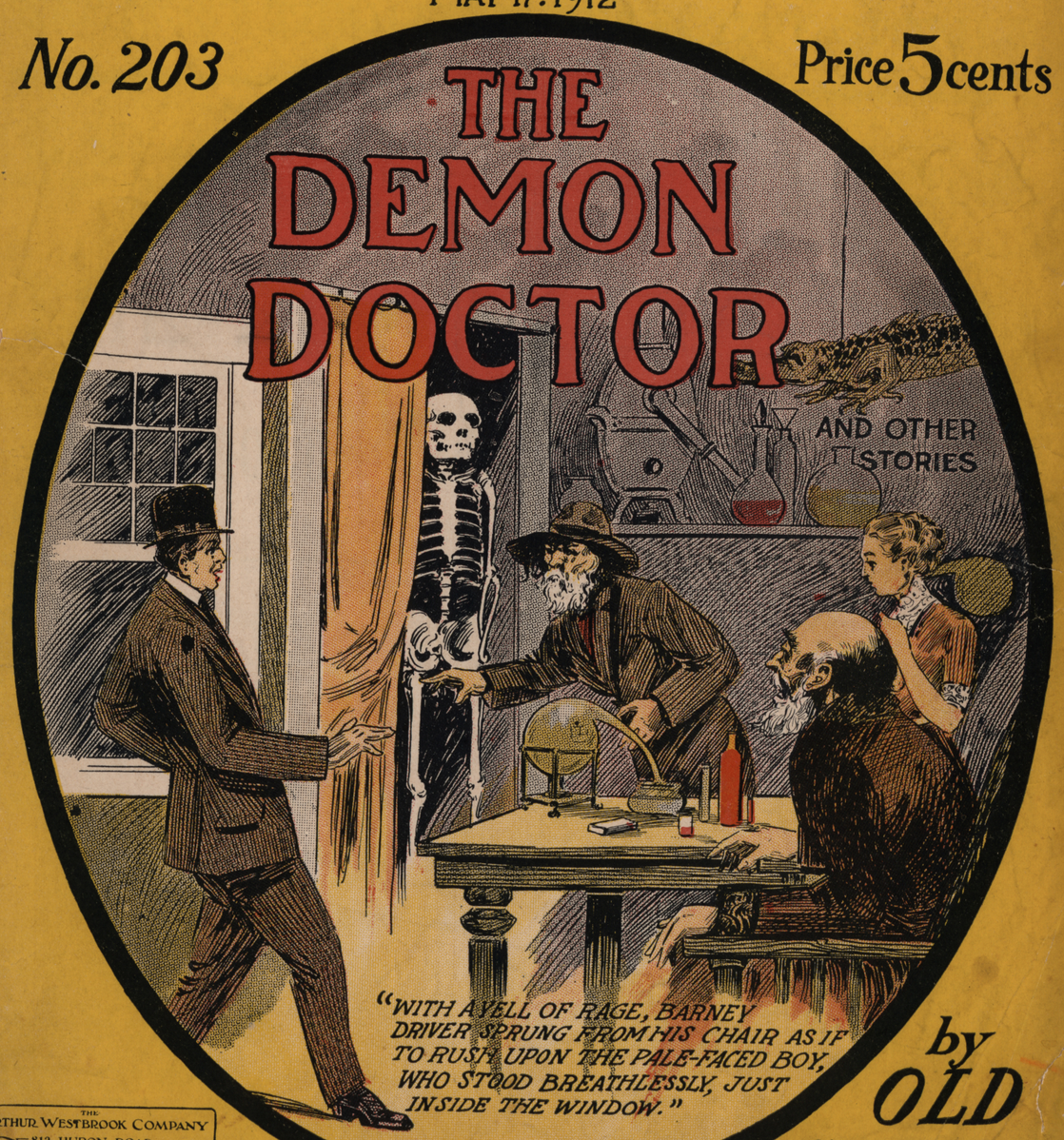

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